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The process of homosexual identification and the effect of the homosexual subculture on the lifestyle of the homosexual.

Mark A. Eisenberg
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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THE PROCESS OF HOMOSEXUAL IDENTIFICATION AND
THE EFFECT OF THE HOMOSEXUAL SUBCULTURE ON THE LIFESTYLE
OF THE HOMOSEXUAL

A Dissertation

by

MARK A. EISENBERG

M.S., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy

August

1974

Clinical Psychology

THE PROCESS OF HOMOSEXUAL IDENTIFICATION
AND THE EFFECT OF THE HOMOSEXUAL SUBCULTURE OF THE
LIFESTYLE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL

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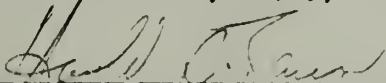
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Mark A. Eisenberg

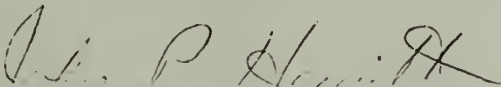
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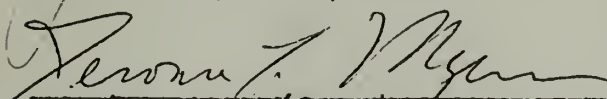
Sheldon Cashdan, Ph.D., Chairman of Committee



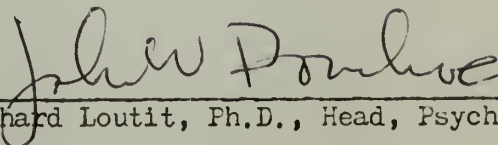
Harold Raush, Ph.D., Member



John Hewitt, Ph.D., Member



Jermonie Myers, Ph.D., Member



Richard Loutit, Ph.D., Head, Psychology

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The Process of Homosexual Identification and the Effect of the Homosexual Subculture of the Lifestyle of the Homosexual

(August 1974)

Mark A. Eisenberg, B.A., Queens College

M.S., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Dr. Sheldon Cashdan

The author studied the process of homosexual identification and the effect of the homosexual subculture on the lifestyle of the homosexual by means of the administration of a semi-structured interview to 25 "career" homosexuals and observation, both covert and overt, of homosexuals in bars, baths, the street and as members of gay liberation organizations. The main findings of the study were:

One, homosexuality must be considered a wide ranging social as well as a sexual phenomenon.

Two, there exists a reasonably definite sequence of steps which seem to be significant in terms of "becoming" a homosexual. They are:

- a) the point at which the subject first had fantasies about homosexual acts or romantic attachments to males;
- b) his first sexual experience with a male;
- c) his realization that he is homosexually oriented;
- d) his first contact with other homosexuals in a social setting and;
- e) his entrance into homosexual society.

Three, there exists a homosexual community which tends to promote the sharing of a common set of ideas, values, and role prescriptions.

Four, this community functions for its members in certain crucial ways: it provides a source of sexual partners; it fosters an atmosphere which grants legitimacy to the expression of sexual drives; it controls and structures sexual behavior; it protects its members from the author-

ities; it allows its members to maintain their isolation from an often hostile world; it provides a source of platonic friends and social activities; it reduces dissonance between the homosexuals present behavior and previously learned value systems; it promotes a reduction of guilt by allowing the homosexual to internalize community mores relating to the "value" of being homosexual; it fosters a sense of belonging to an "in" rather than an "out" group; it provides an outlet whereby emotional needs for love and affection can be satisfied; it provides the participants with a positive sense of self-worth; it provides a force towards changing prevailing social and legal attitudes; and it provides support to members should they experience an unfavorable interaction with the "straight" community.

Five, in many ways this community and its value system is ultimately detrimental to the homosexual. There exists in the homosexual community a "single standard" criterion by which physical attractiveness becomes a variable of overwhelming importance in interpersonal and social interaction. This leads to problems in the formation of intimate relationships and severe conflict for older homosexuals. Additionally, the community's sanction of promiscuity leads to difficulty in the formation of stable relationships, a superficiality in relationships that do exist, an increasingly cynical outlook towards human relationships and a feeling on the part of many homosexuals that even sexuality is losing its meaning for them.

Six, there are changes that occur in the concept of the "self" in the course of a homosexual career. Such changes are a process and seem to occur in three contexts: in the establishment of self when the homosexual "comes out"; in the maintenance of self when he is an active homosexual in contact with homosexual society; and in the failure of self that may occur as he ages and begins to lose his sexual attractive-

ness.

Seven, there exist homosexual "marriages" with distinct similarities and differences in relation to the heterosexual institution. Such marriages are often unstable partially because the wider society does not grant legitimacy to them and partially because the mores of the homosexual community do not promote stable relationships.

Eight, the homosexual is exposed to many societal pressures of an internal, social and legal variety. The social fabric and mores of the homosexual community are instrumental in alleviating such pressure.

Nine, there exist organizations of homosexuals for social and political purposes known as "gay liberation" organizations. Such social liberation is intimately tied to the self-concept of the homosexual.

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Introduction

The subject of homosexuality is undoubtedly one of the least understood psychological phenomenon while at the same time one of the most widely (and wildly) theorized about. Estimates of prevalence vary but tend to indicate that about four percent of American white males are exclusively homosexual throughout their lives and that approximately ten per cent are exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55 (1,2).^{*} Furthermore, Kinsey indicates that approximately thirteen percent of his sample reacted erotically to other males even though they had never had any overt homosexual contacts after adolescence and an additional thirty-seven per cent had at least one homosexual experience which resulted in orgasm.

On the question of causation, "definitive" formulations are rampant. The most influential psychodynamic theory, that of Freud (3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) sees all persons having a primary biological bisexual orientation which later becomes directed toward one sex as a result of certain crucial psychosocial experiences. Supposedly, there is a temporary homoerotic phase in this process so that when homosexuality develops later in life it is considered either an arrested development or a return to an earlier stage. This, in turn, is thought to be a result of excessive castration anxiety caused by pathogenic family constellations. The problem with this analytic formulation is that the castration anxiety is also theoretically responsible for the development of male identification and it provides little explanation of precisely what

circumstances will lead to what is sometimes considered the opposite result (i.e. male homosexuality).

Another psychodynamic view, proposed by Bieber (11,12) is similar to Freud's in its historical emphasis but differs in the basic assumption of bisexuality. Bieber views heterosexuality as the biologic norm. He subsequently sees all deviations from this norm as abnormalities produced by hidden fears of heterosexual functioning which, he claims, have originated from pathogenic life experiences usually having to do with an over-protective, seductive mother.

Other psychological theories shift the etiological emphasis somewhat but tend also to view homosexuality as a derivative of early life experiences: Melanie Klein (13) and Bergler (14) discuss, for example, the importance of oral fixation. They believe that oral frustrations cause the child to develop cannibalistic wishes toward the mother's breast; the child, however, projects his fantasies and views the vagina, which he supposedly unconsciously "equates" with the mouth, as a devouring, frightening and murderous organ. "Such anticipations result in the avoidance of the heterosexual object and only a relationship with a male (in which the male genital, symbolizing the breast, is reassuringly present) becomes suitable..."(15). Sullivan, placing more emphasis on sociological factors, regards homosexuality as resulting from experiences which have "erected a barrier to integration with persons of the opposite sex". Thus, his view of homosexual development stresses factors occurring later in childhood than do the views of Freud, Bieber and Klein.

There are also a number of theories which would seem to en-

phasize biological or genetic determinants. Kallman(18), for example, reports one hundred per cent concordance for homosexuality in 40 pairs of monozygotic twins. However, one hundred per cent results are unusual and often point to experimental bias of some sort. This result, moreover, has not been supported by most other investigators. Kolb (19), for example, found seven pairs of monozygotic twins in which one twin of the pair was homosexual while the other was not.

There is some evidence that homosexuality may be associated with a genetic abnormality known as Klinefelter's Syndrome (20, 21) but the influence of this is unclear since most homosexuals do not suffer from it and most people who do are not homosexual.

Some recent evidence suggests that there may be a possibility of a more clear hormonal association. Loraine, et. al. (23) found differences in twenty-four hour urinary testosterone levels between hetero- and homosexuals and Margolese(24) found he could clearly and unequivocally identify homo-and heterosexuals by the relative quantities of two urinary breakdown products and testosterone and etiocholanolone.

Such evidence, however, is open to criticism, as Kety (46) points out in a relevant critique of biochemical theories of schizophrenia, that:

- a) all homosexuality may not have a common etiology and the phenomenon may be a composite of several different ~~illnesses~~ *qualities traits, phenomena...*
- b) different levels of sexual activity, diet, exercise,

- etc., may result in the presence or absence of various metabolites which then may be correlated falsely with the phenomenon under study
- c) emotional stress associated with homosexuality may appear to cause biochemical differences between experimental and control groups without being a primary or etiological cause

Most other biological evidence is somewhat unclear and cause and effect relationships are very difficult to separate out.

Slater (22), for example, has speculated that homosexuals tend to be born later in the birth order and that there is a hidden chromosomal abnormality. This situation, however, may also be explained on a psychological basis by invoking the assumption that mothers become more deeply involved with later children.

Perhaps the greatest trouble with current research is that it concentrates too much on etiology. When one is dealing with a potential population of two million individuals (a projection of Kinsey's four per cent figure to the United States population of two hundred million- one hundred million of whom are males and fifty million of whom are over the age of fourteen), questions of acculturation, present adjustment, psychological health, and acclimation into a homosexual subculture would also seem to be of great importance. Furthermore, the behavioral patterns of the homosexual may have little to do with the root causes of homosexuality as we observe them. Simon and Gagnon(43) put this point very well:

"... from a sociological point of view, what the original causes were may not even be very important for the patterns

of homosexuality observed in a society. Much like the medical student who comes to medicine for many reasons, and for whom the homogeneity that is professional behavior arises from the experiences of medical school rather than from the root cause of occupational choice, the patterns of adult homosexuality are attendant upon the social structures and values which occur to the homosexual after he becomes, or conceives of himself as, homosexual, rather than upon original and ultimate causes..."(44)

Despite this, there are relatively few systematic observations of groups of non-parient homosexuals (25,26,27,28,29, 30,31,32,33). What evidence that does exist points to the conclusion that homosexuality is not necessarily a form of pathology, in the sense of "mental illness". Hooker (31), for example, compared a group of thirty homosexuals and thirty heterosexuals matched for age, education and I.Q. on a number of projective tests including the Rorschach and TAT and was unable to find any significant differences on "adjustment ratings" given by persons who were recognized experts in the use of these projectives. Similarly, Chang and Block (34), using a measure of "self-acceptance" (defined as the difference between a self-rating and an ideal-self-rating) were unable to find substantive differences between homo-and heterosexuals.

The present study represents an attempt to study homosexuality as an adult developmental process, with an emphasis on how the homosexuals adopts and maintains his lifestyle. It will concentrate on several questions on which there is little descriptive data so that a context might be developed whereby the

phenomenon of homosexuality can be viewed in the proper interactional perspective.

The aim of the study is to answer the following questions:

- a) Looking at the dimensions of peer and social relationships and general lifestyle, how does one become a homosexual? That is what is the process by which one identifies oneself as homosexual and becomes part of the homosexual ~~subculture~~?
- b) How does becoming a member of the homosexual ~~subculture~~ change selfperception, social relationships and general lifestyle?
- c) What are some of the focal ways that the homosexual ~~subculture~~ functions for its members?

Some researchers, e.g. Saghir and Robins (29,30,31,32,33) have already obtained considerable information in this area, but their studies suffer from several important defects. The former used a much too highly selected sample. Subjects had to be productive members of the community, self-declared homosexuals, adults, members of a homophile organization, and never to have been in prison or in a psychiatric hospital. Furthermore, most of their subjects were of a relatively high socio-economic status. Saghir and Robins never actually went in to the homosexual subculture to do any first hand observation. Hooker, in contrast, did attempt to make considerable observation of the homosexual community, but it is highly probable that her results were biased because she was female and because she could not gain access to some of the more restricted meeting places. Additionally, Hooker's sample suffered

from some of the same defects as Saghir and Robins' in that there was such a high degree of selectivity that her results were likely to be biased toward revealing a relative absence of pathology.

A Note On Methodology And Approach

The present study is a naturalistic examination of homosexuality which utilizes the following investigative sources:

- a) A semi-structured interview given to a group of 25 homosexuals of varying ages.
- b) In situation observation of the homosexual subculture including bars, baths, street cruising areas, social and friendship cliques and homosexual organizations (both social and militant).

The interview covered the following basic areas:

- a) Demographic information
- b) Early family history
- c) Heterosexual history
- d) Homosexual history
- e) Self-perception as a function of age and homosexual experience
- f) Peer and social relationships as a function of age and homosexual experience
- g) General lifestyle as a function of age and homosexual experience
- h) Degree to which the subject feels his basic needs are being met by the homosexual subculture
- i) Subject's description of the homosexual subculture
- j) Miscellaneous areas

Examples of questions from each of these areas are given in Apendix 1.

The naturalistic observation section of the study will give as comprehensive a view as possible of the ways in which the homosexual subculture affects its members. More specific

detail can be found in the "Subjects and Methodology" chapter.

Since the methodology and approach used in this study differ from that usually found in psychology theses, it might be wise, at this juncture, to make several points in relation to this:

1) This study is oriented in its basic approach to a philosophy known as Symbolic Interactionism, built on the philosophy of George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blummer (35). This school of thought has several basic premises and contains very important implications which have bearing on methodology. As stated by Blummer in an essay "On the Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism", such premises are:

" Human group life consists of the fitting to each other of the lines of action of the participants; such aligning of actions takes place predominantly by the participants indicating to one another what to do and in turn interpreting such indications made by the others; out of such indications people form the objects that constitute their worlds; people are prepared to act towards their objects on the basis of the meaning that these objects have for them;...human action is constructed by the actor on the basis of what he notes, interprets, and assesses; and the interlinking of such ongoing actions constitutes organizations, institutions and vast complexes of interdependant relations..." (36)

Moreover, Blummer states that:

"...to test the validity of these premises one must go to a direct examination of actual group life-not to a contrived laboratory setting, not to a scheme of operationalizing concepts, not to a testing of hypothesis, and not to a scrutiny of whether the premises can be made to fit a protocol of research procedure." (37)

In terms of the specifics of this particular study, the need was felt to actually delve into and thoroughly explore the actual subcultural context at first hand to determine how the homosexual sees both this context and the "straight" world, not to merely look at the subculture from the author's point of view and to unrealistically determine whether that subculture fits certain preconceptions. Sells (38) phrases this in a slightly different way in an article entitled "Ecology and the Science of Psychology" when he states that "...the understanding of behavior requires systematic study of the environmental pattern defining the ecological niche...and the adaptations required by that environment..." (39).

1) Even if it were possible to study homosexual behavior in a laboratory setting, it is likely that this behavior would not duplicate the behavior to be found in the actual environment. Such behavior is best seen as not only occurring in a highly specified context (e.g. a gay bar which tends to give its patron certain expectations and probably justifiable presuppositions about the people in it) but also in reaction to that context. Mechanic (45) puts this point well in an essay on the definitional process in the recognition of mental illness when he states that "the behaviors defined as symptoms of mental illness may be as much characteristic of some particular situation or some group setting as they are enduring attributes of persons. Psychology as a science has generally been highly neglectful of

environmental context, preferring to concern itself more with internal variables. Barker puts it succinctly (40):

"...one might think that in the course of its necessary concern with stimuli, psychology would have become informed about the human environment. But this is not the case. Psychology has necessarily attended to those elements of its subjects, within psychology's black box. Psychology knows much about the physical properties and dimensions of the environmental probes it uses--of distal objects of perception, for example, and of the energy changes at receptor surfaces. But the problem is, that in the course of its investigations, it has excised these environmental objects from the contexts in which they normally occur; mealtimes, offices, airplanes, arithmetic classes, streets and the sidewalks."

This study takes a close look at the contexts in which homosexual behavior occurs and attempts to make some clinical inferences about the influence of the specific context on the given behavior. Toward that end, little attempt was made to impose an arbitrary measuring scheme on the behavior in question. Instead, we tried to describe complex behavioral interactions in terms of process. For this reason the interview was used as a data generation device. The experimenter is of the opinion that psychology has been too often influenced in its choice of problems by the tools it has available and the preconceptions it has about the use of such tools. To say that a variable can be ignored because it cannot be reliably and precisely mathematically quantified is to be unrealistic. To attempt to measure it by means of scales and tests which, by their very nature, cannot capture its essential interactional, temporal-sequenced, subjective nature seems equally unrealistic. For this

reason the interview and field observation were employed here as the techniques of choice because they permit sufficient structure so that orderly data can be obtained and, at the same time they provide enough freedom so that new data (i.e. data not previously planned to be a subject of study; data considered to be irrelevant to a given theory; data difficult to "quantify" and thus ignored by the experimenter; or data not thought to be important but which appears to have crucial significance later) can be explored. Additionally, the above techniques capture a clinical essence that more formal techniques cannot.

3) A third reason for the choice of the interactionist-field approach was the fact that it may be useful to look at temporal processes of complex interactions, and to make note of certain phenomenon which, for obvious reasons, cannot take place in a laboratory, e.g. a "cruising" situation in a bar as a series of temporally chained events such that the choice of each event is dependent on the outcome of the event prior to it.

4) A fourth reason for the interactionist--field approach revolves around the fact that in a largely unknown area one primary task seems to be, as Guttmann puts it (42), data--generation rather than data-accumulation in regard to prespecified conceptions. For this reason the stated aim of the study not to provide information about any preconceived theories but to provide richly descriptive and hopefully valid information about a little known context and population so that relevant variables can then be identified.

Subjects and MethodologySubjects

Subjects to be interviewed and observed were exclusively males (because of : 1) difficulty in gaining entry into lesbian social centers; 2) the fact that the presence of a male who is not a part of the lesbian subculture may bias the results- especially when trying to evaluate the data via an interactionist, participant-observer approach; 3) the fact that few contacts are available to the experimenter to gain access to a suitable number of female subjects in the proper setting) drawn from the following sources:

- a) Members of the University of Massachusetts Homophile League
- b) Members of the New York City Gay Activists Alliance Group
- c) Friends and contacts of members of the above groups
- d) Two homosexual friends of the experimenter
- e) Patrons of a homosexual bar in Springfield, Massachusetts, one in Hartford, Connecticut, one in New York City, and one in Boston, Massachusetts.
- f) If possible an attempt will be made to interview frequenters of various outdoor homosexual cruising areas in Springfield Massachusetts.

The number of subjects were twenty-five. Age varied and there was a range of sixteen to forty-six with the majority of the subjects being between 20 and 30. Attempts were made to include a variety of "types": "straight" appearing homosexuals; those that seem relatively effeminate; those that engage in sado-masochistic practices; male homosexual transvestites, etc.

Interviewing

Based on four pilots, the interview required approximately

Five to six hours and with rare exceptions were completed in one session with appropriate breaks interspersed. Locations varied and included the subject's home, the experimenter's home, the offices of gay liberation organizations, as well as an occasional "neutral" location (e.g. a homosexual restaurant in New York City) for more reluctant subjects. In general the interview took place where the subject felt most comfortable and where there was a maximum of privacy and , in some cases, anonymity.

Basic items covered were demographic information, early family history, heterosexual history, homosexual history, self-perception as a function of age and homosexual experience, peer and social relationships as a function of age and homosexual experience, general lifestyle as a function of age and homosexual experience, the homosexual's view of his needs and the degree to which they are being met by the homosexual subculture, and the subject's descriptions of the homosexual subculture.

More detailed information is contained in Appendix I.

Most interviews were taped and identifying information was removed. A summary of the tape was made and the original tape returned to the subject. The summary was then shown to the subject so that he was satisfied that all identifying information had been removed or sufficiently altered. If the subject felt it is necessary to change essential information in order to make use of the record then all tapes and summaries would be returned and the record would not be used. The experimenter realized that such possible deletions may introduce bias but such an agreement was necessary, considering the highly sensitive social

implications of the data, to obtain cooperative subjects. In those cases where the subject would not permit taping, note taking, as verbatim as possible, was used. As with the tapes, a summary was made with the same option of return to the subjects.

Participant Observation

The experimenter posed as a homosexual in the following settings:

- a) Several homosexual bars in Hartford and Springfield
- b) A cruising area (an area known and frequented by homosexuals for the purpose of making immediate sexual pick-ups) known as the "fruit loop" in Hartford, Conn.
- c) A homosexual cabaret in New York City
- d) A Homosexual steam bath in New York City (A place-ostensibly a type of "sauna" but without the steam-which contains small rooms which homosexuals may rent on while other homosexuals cruise outside; and compacts are made to have immediate sexual relations. There are also larger rooms and cubicles where public and observable sexual relations take place).
- e) A sado-masochistic bar in New York City
- f) Dances given by the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City.

The experimenter spent much of the past six months being tutored in methods of eye-contact, mannerism and general approach by several homosexuals involved in the study and has visited all of the places described with no trouble in "passing".

Each of the locations visited was observed with an eye towards assessing:

- a) General atmosphere
- b) Type of clientel (this differs from place to place)
- c) Descriptions of temporally linked events (including eye contact, body movements, conversations, physical contact) used to initiate sexual or other types of approaches.
- d) Specific sexual activities (if any) that go on in the location
- e) General treatment and attitude toward the management
- f) Feelings of the clientel, about the location
- g) Initiation of novitiates into each location
- h) Age-relevant differences in behavior
- i) Advantages and disadvantages of the particular location as perceived by the clientel
- j) Degree of harassment (if any) interactions that take place there.

The above information was obtained by observation of and conversation with the clientel.

The prime objective of such observation and description was:

- a) To understand the meaning and nature of the interactions as perceived by the participants.
- b) To make some formulation as to what extent and in what way the general atmosphere of homosexual subculture influences homosexual behavior.
- c) To describe the settings and subculture in a way that will be helpful to the practicing clinician in dealing with homosexual patients and to the theoretician in assessing which aspects of the homosexual's behavior are due to the phenomenon itself and which to the social setting in which they occur.

Introduction to the ResultsQuote:

"...Official information is not only an unreliable source for studying deviance but it is also systematically biased in line with the needs and desires of officials...the only alternative is to use, almost exclusively, some form of participation in order to observe deviance in its natural setting..."

Jack Douglas, Research on Deviance, p. 4

Quote:

"...Undoubtedly the most problematic secret research role is that of the male homosexual. Once the male heterosexual researcher has decided that he is able to play such a role without personal anguish, many problems remain. For example, it is easy to say "no" to sexual overtures--few homosexuals are determined rapists--but repeated "nos" would cast doubt on the researchers role...role finesse is of extreme importance and is not part of the commonsense societal knowledge..."

Carol A.B. Warren, Observing the Gay Community p.5

The present study has taken more than fourteen months to complete and has involved both overt and covert participant-observer research. The author has, in all but a strictly sexual sense, tried to participate in as many aspects of the homosexual community as possible. Among other things this has meant: working for four months as a coat check in a homosexual bar; visiting a homosexual steam bath observing and interacting with homosexual friendship cliques; observing various instances of live sexual activity at social events and steam baths; and narrowly avoiding being burned to death when one of the bars involved in the research was destroyed by an arsonist. Additional activities involved cruising the streets in a car and on foot in an attempt to talk to some of the more reluctant members of the homosexual community; visiting a sado-masochistic leather bar; attending a "slave" auction; and spending hundreds of hours interviewing homosexual men about some of the most intimate details of their lives.

Some of the research was overt (i.e. the author frankly described himself as a researcher looking for information) while some was covert (i.e. the author posed as a homosexual). The sequence, location and role of the researcher was as follows:

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Observer</u>	<u>Role</u>
Leather bar, night-spots, baths	New York	Covert	
Gay Activists Alliance, other gay organizations	New York	Overt	
Social events	New York	Overt	
Bars	New York Boston	Overt	

Small group of activists	Springfield	Overt
Interviews	New York, Boston Springfield Hartford*	Overt
Bars, coat-check street scene	Hartford Springfield	Covert
Resort	Provincetown, Mass.	Covert

As far as the author was aware, there was no contamination of his covert status from his earlier overt appearances. The greatest danger occurred just after the interviews but interviewees were asked to be discreet and it was explained to them that later the author would have to assume a covert status.

A number of quotes are presented before each chapter in this report. Names and, in some cases, localities and circumstances have been altered to prevent identification of the individuals involved. Common hesitations of everyday speech have also been removed for clarity's sake.

As a reader examines this report he is asked to keep in mind its central theme: Homosexuality is not an isolated phenomenon limited to the parameters of sexuality. It is, rather, a social phenomenon, one involving an entire subculture, with all the richness, texture and subtlety of human interactional processes.

* Springfield and Hartford interviewees were obtained from gay liberation organizations

Quote:

"...But there's no such thing as the typical homosexual. Who's the typical man who drinks milk? Your question is no different. There's tremendous variety...there are doctors and ditchdiggers, some are piss-elegant and some are god damn slobs. It runs the gamut...It really depends on where you go to look...The Stancheon will get the college crowd and the Napoleon will bet the wrinkle queens...Then there are the hustlers on the street and dirty old men, and the baths get the horny bastards...either that or those who just can't relate to anybody and they want to get their rocks off. If you want to get a good idea of the different types you're going to have to go out and find them because a lot of them won't sit still to be interviewed. Like, no one who's very closety is going to volunteer to tell you if they've rimmed someone... but whatever you want to see there's a place where it's out in the open..."

Subjects interviewed consisted of twenty-five male homosexuals ranging in age from 16 through 46 (mean age 26.9) obtained from the following sources: volunteers from gay organizations (8); personal friends of the experimenter (2); approached at a homosexual bar by the experimenter (6); approached on the street (i.e. - the cruising block) by the experimenter (1); approached at a party by the experimenter (2); sent to the experimenter on friend's recommendation (6).

All were actively homosexual. Twenty-three had had a sexual contact during the previous two weeks, the remaining two in the previous four weeks. Nine of the sample had "lovers" (i.e. homosexual marriage partners), whereas seven described themselves as having current "affairs" and nine described themselves as "currently single". One was a male prostitute, one was being kept by an older wealthy benefactor, one regularly practised sadism and masochism and one was a "drag queen" (a male homosexual who appears in public or at a gay bar in blatantly exaggerated female dress).

Occupationally there was a wide range: seven were professionals (one physician, three teachers, one social worker, two accountants); four were college or graduate students; two were self-employed (one photographer, one printer); one was self-employed as a prostitute; three had skilled blue-collar jobs (two mechanics, one lathe operator); seven had white collar jobs; and one was unemployed. Seventeen subjects had completed college or beyond, seven had just a high school diploma and one had dropped out of school at age sixteen.

In terms of geographic and racial background, all were presently from urban areas (New York City, Boston, Springfield and Hartford) although two had spent the majority of their early years in predominantly rural areas. Twenty-three were white, one was black and one Chinese-American.

In terms of heterosexual status, twenty-four were currently single, although three had been married and divorced, while one was married but separated.

Generally, the subjects seemed extremely cooperative. There was, amazingly, not a single refusal to answer a question, an unusual occurrence in view of the kind of material involved. This can probably be attributed to the feeling, voiced quite explicitly by some subjects, that homosexuality is a misunderstood phenomenon and that a more accurate conception of its nature might have an effect on prevailing social and legal attitudes. Although the interviewees were most anxious to have an effect on such attitudes, they did insist that their material remain private and that any material taken for their interviews be published only in part (so that they would not be recognized through an entire transcript).

Finally, it must be realized that the conclusions drawn from this particular sample will not be representative of the homosexual population as a whole because of the particular kinds of selection involved i.e. the sample was drawn from places that tend to be frequented by those who are middle-class, college-educated, and young. Additionally,

only those who were fairly open and those who had chosen career roles as homosexuals were interviewed. Because of this non-representativeness, the author made an effort, wherever possible, to base his conclusions on larger cross-sections of homosexuals he has come in contact with in the other portions of this project.

In the pages to follow, the data are presented in terms of issues and settings revolving around the subject of homosexuality. A glossary precedes these sections to familiarize the reader with the argot of the homosexual trade, an argot which pervades much of the material presented in this study.

Glossary

Arrangement- Agreement by which homosexual lovers can maintain a "marriage" relationship while having sexual contact with others.

Block- Cruising area in which automobile pick-ups and hustling occur

Blow- To stimulate the penis of the partner orally

Bull-dyke--A derogatory term for a masculine-appearing lesbian

Butch- Generally complimentary term for masculinity in a male homosexual

Chicken- A young homosexual

Chicken Queen- A homosexual, usually somewhat older, who is attracted strongly to young homosexuals

Class- See "rating system"

Closet Queen- A derogatory term for a homosexual who knows he is homosexual but does not care to appear openly in gay places.

Closety- A homosexual who is not sure whether he is, in fact, homosexual.

Coming out- Entering the homosexual subculture and performing the role expectations of "homosexual" for the first time.

Cruising- Activity involved in picking-up another male. Such activity involves eye contact, sustained staring, body language, movement, etc. The form of the cruising depends on the situation. See chapters on the bars, the baths and the street scene.

Dick- Detective

Dick in the suds- Detective present

Deal- Attractive male homosexual

Discipline- Euphemistic term for sado-masochistic practices usually involving bondage

D.O.M.- Dirty Old Man. This refers to an older homosexual, especially when he tries to pick up younger homosexuals.

Drag- The female clothing worn by a male homosexual, usually blatantly exaggerated

Drag Queen--A male homosexual who dresses in drag

Drop a load- Ejaculate

Dyke- Semi-derogatory term for a lesbian

Faggot- Derogatory term for a male homosexual. May be used by other homosexuals to refer to an effeminate homosexual.

Fag-hag- A female who is a friend of a male homosexual and enters into the homosexual scene. The term is slightly derogatory.

Fem- Effeminate in mannerisms. Does not refer to taking the feminine sexual role

French culture- Euphemistic term for oral sex

Go down on- Perform oral sex on

Grade- See "rating system"

Greek culture- Euphemistic term for anal sex

Hooking partner- Bedmate in whom a homosexual has no particular romantic interest

Hook- Take to bed

Leather Queen- Someone involved in the sado-masochistic elements of the homosexual subculture who wears the traditional dress of leather garments

Load-Semen

Number-Synonym for "deal" i.e. an attractive male homosexual.

Queen- A derogatory term for an effeminate homosexual. Can also be attached to the other descriptions (e.g. leather queen, chicken queen, etc.) where it does not imply effeminacy but rather implies a derogatory aspect.

Queer- A derogatory term for a male homosexual usually not used by one homosexual to refer to another except in self-deprecatory humor

Queer-baiter- A heterosexual who may rob or beat up a homosexual, usually after tempting him to engage in some kind

of sexual act

Rating system- A rather idiosyncratic system used in some parts of the country by which one homosexual can rate another on a number of variables. Includes the conception of "class" which refers to appropriateness and availability and "grade" which refers to sexual and personal attractiveness.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Grade</u>
1. available and appropriate	Grade may run from "A" which indicates extreme sexual and personal attractive --ness through "F" which indicates extreme unattractiveness.
2. friends or others to whom the incest taboo applies	
3. appropriate but not available for reasons other than that in class 2 e.g. having a lover	
4. available but <u>grossly</u> inappropriate (e.g. by virtue of age)	

Rimming-Massaging the anus with the tongue

Roll over-Permit anal intercourse as the receiver

Score-Pick up a sexual contact(trick)

Screw-Insert penis into the anus

Sisters-Two homosexual friends between whom there is no present sexual involvement

Sixty-nine-Mutual oral sex between two male homosexuals. Name derives from the position that the partners assume

Size Queen-Homosexual who prefers partners with a large penis

Straight- Homosexual term for heterosexual

Take it-To swallow the semen in oral sex

Tea room-Bathroom, usually public, where sexual contacts are made and actual acts sometimes are consummated

Trade- Homosexual who pays for sexual services

Transvestite-A homosexual who wears female clothes that are designed to look as realistic as possible. Also

includes make-up and other accessories. A transvestite is not the same as a drag queen, the latter wearing dress that is blatantly exaggerated

Trick-A sexual contact or the act of having such a sexual contact

Trick out-To have a sexual contact outside of a lover relationship

Wrinkle queen- Derogatory term for an older homosexual

Wrinkle room-Derogatory term for a bar or club that caters to older homosexuals

The Street SceneQuote:

"...I used to think that doing the streets was immoral and filthy, just that the whole thing was dirty and revolting. I used to imagine: What if my parents could see me going around the block like that...I used to see guys cruising who looked like my father. I knew they weren't but that would really freak me out....There would be some deals there too but I used to feel sick every time I did something...One time this dirty old man came up to me and he offered me fifteen bucks to suck his prick in the back seat. I knew that he wasn't a dick because I had seen him practically every night I went there and his wrist was a little limp too...At first I just wanted to say "Get the fuck away from me!", but then I figured, what the hell, I'm not the cleanest person in the world and I've done it before so there's maybe five minutes of suchking and fifteen bucks and I'm not going to take his load anyway--that's something I never do, even now, unless I really love the guy--so the fifteen seemed good so I said OK...We got into his car and drove into the parking lot... We got into the back seat and he unzipped only so in case we saw a cop car coming it wouldn't take too long to cover up. Well anyway, he wasn't circumcized and it smelled but I went down on him anyway and it served him right because as the bastard was about to come he pulled my head down and I had to take it, but I gagged and threw up all over the son-of-a-bitch. I wanted to run but I was too scared and I finally just helped him clean it up with my jacket... I didn't get the money and I didn't ask for it...I did stuff on the street but I had never taken money before and I figured throwing up was a good excuse no to start... Well, after that I didn't go to the block for nearly a year and then finally John took me down to the Stancheon (a homosexual bar) and there I saw a lot of people I thought I had seen on the block...There were a couple of people I really wanted to get it on with...It was really funny...This time I could talk to them and they seemed pretty open to me, the same people, that was the funny part...when they go to the block its like everyone is paranoid but when they're in the bar everything is really different. Like a lot of people went to both places. If some number didn't score with a trick he'd go out and cruise the block...Most of them didn't feel guilty like I did or if they did, they did a pretty good job of hiding it...I went back one night after I couldn't find a trick and the first night there I met Mike. He was tricking out because he had a lover then but he was out of

town. We had to go back to his place because I didn't have a place but we didn't go to bed right away. We had breakfast, we listened to the stereo and we talked for quite a bit...It was really different from anything I ever did. It wasn't dirty and I felt OK about it. Also, I never felt guilty about what I did on the block after that but since Mike and I have been going out and everything, I haven't done too much..."

The "street" or "the block", as it is sometimes called, refers to an area consensually designated by the homosexual community as one in which two types of activity take place: hustling and "automobile cruising".

Automobile cruising: This is a highly ritualized series of chain-ed behaviors (which are at their peak from 9p.m. to 4a.m. but which may frequently go on until well past dawn) whereby one homosexual may pick up another for the purpose of establishing a sexual contact. Unlike most contacts made in a bar, little or no attention is paid to conversation and there is little or no expectation that the pick-up will lead to a relationship. The sequence of events is basically as follows:

1) Exploration: This consists of a homosexual driving around the block, signaling at each right turn, and slowing down, almost to a stop, when passing occupied parked cars containing other males. Usually this is repeated several times so that the cruiser may obtain an idea of what other attractive males are present.

2A) Indication of interest: The homosexual brings his car almost to a complete stop in front of a car which contains an object of sexual interest. He advances ten to twenty feet and waits for the other to follow. Then to step 3a or 3b.

2B) Indication of interest: Those homosexuals who want to be slightly more passive may use this indication instead of 2a: The homosexual parks his car on the side of the street and stares

at those who slow down as they pass him. If they stare back he may follow. Then to step 3a or 3b.

3A Further indication of interest and pick-up (passive role):

The homosexual pulls ahead of the other car (if he has been following), makes another complete circuit of the block and pulls over to the side in a place such that the other car can pull in behind him. The person in the car that follows will usually take the initiative. If there is still interest, tail lights will be blinked.

3B) Further indication of interest and pick-up (active role):

The homosexual lets the other person pull ahead and he follows closely behind, indicating via signal lights and intention to pull over. If the other person is interested he pulls over and the homosexual pulls in behind him.

4) Tentative approach: Active member takes a noncommittal stance by getting out of his car and walking forward past the car of the passive member. If he decides at this point that he is not interested he walks back to his car and pulls away. If the passive member is not interested he keeps his window rolled up. If the active member is interested he stands there and stares at the passive member. If the passive member is interested he rolls his window down and looks at the active member.

5) Confirming approach: The active participant usually starts a conversation with a noncommittal "How are YOU?", "What are

you up to?", etc. Passive participant usually invites him in- to the car if interested. If not, he makes the standard reply: "I'm just waiting for a friend".

6) Contract negotiation: Either participant may inquire as to the availability of a place the couple can go to. Usually this is preceded by a verbal attempt to confirm the other's interest e.g. "Do you have to go home tonight?" etc. It is at this stage that specific sexual proclivities may be inquired after or prohibitions given.

It should be emphasized that steps one through six represent a highly chained series of behavioral events and any failure to follow the sequence will usually result in an immediate breaking off of the contact by the other party. This is virtually a rule of the street and the reasons for it are several: an assumption of lack of interest by the other party; the possibility that the person who breaks the chain is doing it because he is not familiar with the requirements because he is a "queer-baiter" (i.e. a heterosexual who may rob the cruiser) or a "dick" (detective); The assumption that the other party may have found someone else more attractive in his cruising past the other cars.

In order to explore this phenomenon first-hand the author was taught the basics of street cruising by one of the interview subjects whose name is Jay. The author was then

able to cruise the block in tandem with Jay using the electric antenna on the author's car as a "trouble signal". The antenna was usually left down as the author pulled over to the curb. Jay, meanwhile, would keep circling the block. Should there be difficulty is "disengaging" from a situation or other difficulty the antenna would be raised and Jay would come over to the car and begin to talk. In 22 attempts this was necessary only once.

The author took the role of the passive participant and out of 22 attempts, 8 were carried to step 4 and 3 to step 5. In one case it was possible to actually recruit one of the cruisers for an interview.

It should be noted that 24 of the 25 interviewees have participated in street cruising at least once and 12 of them continue to do it regularly. They see its advantages as "quick sex without any fuss, "being inexpensive", and "not having any commitment". They see its disadvantages as "possibility of running into "dicks", "possibility of running into "queer-baiters", "the loneliness of sex without caring", and "possibility of running into straight friends".

Initiation of novitiates into the street scene seems to come from two routes. The first is hearing about it from the heterosexual community. In both Springfield, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut, the location of "the block" is a matter of general knowledge and 10 of the 24 interviewees who had

cruised the streets had heard about it in this way. They then learned the technique by trial and error. The remaining 14 had heard before about street cruising from their acquaintances at the bar and usually received a good overview of the specific techniques from these friends.

Police harassment of cruisers is quite frequent but it is actually limited to telling them to leave and breaking up any overt sexual activity that is going on. Six of the sample have reported being stopped by the police but none described serious harassment or an arrest. This pattern of police activity seems partially to be due to the nature of the clientele involved in this activity: It often involves older, sometimes influential, members of the community who apparently have no other homosexual contacts or who do not want to be seen frequenting a homosexual bar. A look at the type of automobiles usually seen on the block tends to substantiate this hypothesis. Most participants are in their late thirties, five to ten years older than the average found at the bar. Additional confirming evidence comes from the reports of interview subjects as to the type of people who have attempted to pick them up in this context.

While police harassment is not a serious risk, personal violence is. Three of the interviewees reported robberies, two of which were accompanied by beatings. These took place after contract negotiation and did not occur on the block itself but rather after the couple had left for some place to consummate the relationship.

Other clientele on the street consist of older homosexuals who can't "make out" in a bar environment, those from the bar who have not "scored" that particular night, and those homosexuals who are not yet confirmed in their career roles. Age-relevant behavior follows the pattern found in the bars in that those who are older tend to take the more active role. The necessity for this is street cruising is obvious. Unlike bars, however, there seems to be no upper age limit and those well into their fifties are effective.

Money or payment for services are rarely a factor in street cruising, although in two instances interviewees report that they have been offered payment. Both these cases involved older homosexuals and seemed to occur when the pick-up did not appear to be leading to a successful conclusion. The reasons for this seem to be several: those homosexuals desiring payment will play the hustling scene on the block and walk rather than ride in automobiles; the payment of money makes those involved subject to possible arrest; and it is easier to find more attractive and available prostitutes in other places.

The qualities for which partners are chosen is somewhat different from that for which they are picked in the bars or the baths. First is "attractiveness", second is "availability".. Unlike the bar, "intelligence" and "personality" are in fourth place while "sexual preference" ranked third. Interviewees also

emphasize that the partner's "looking safe" is another factor.

Hustling: This term refers to a type of street prostitution whereby young homosexuals are solicited by older homosexuals on the street for the purpose of sexual relations. Like street cruising, it is also a series of chained behaviors and there is virtually no expectation that the transaction will lead to any type of relationship.

Hustling and automobile cruising take place on the same block but the hustlers walks the block instead of riding and in this way the prospective customer can determine what is free and what is not. The sequence of events is basically as follows:

- 1) Exploration: The homosexual drives around the block, slowing up as he passes each hustler and staring. This is repeated several times down the length of the block with several hustlers so that the homosexual can firmly establish his intentions and clearly indicate that he is not street cruising at this point.
- 2) Indication of interest: The homosexual stops his car across the street from the hustler, stares at him and waits. If the hustler is interested-and it is always the hustler who makes the active indication of interest-he will stroll past the car and stare at the occupant. If he is not interested he will keep on walking.
- 3) Further indication of interest and tentative approach:

If the hustler continues to remain interested he will walk over to the car, lean against a building and wait for the driver to say something. The driver will then usually ask a non-committal question e.g. "How are you tonight?". This begins the contract negotiation sequence.

4) Contract negotiation: This is usually quite explicit.

The hustler asks what sexual acts the customer would prefer and where he wants to go (This is variable and depends on whether the hustler has a place to go. Most do but some still live with their parents and have to go home with the client.) and states his price. The customer can accept and the two will go off together or he can refuse and both can start the cycle all over again looking for a better deal.

The hustlers are almost always homosexuals who have been previously seen in the bars. Because of the dangerous nature of street cruising and hustling, most older homosexuals require assurance that the person who they pick up will not beat or rob them. Therefore they tend to pick up only those hustlers that they recognize from previous encounters or the bar. There are, of course, heterosexuals who engage in hustling but these frequent different areas e.g. "tea rooms" of parks.

The age range of the hustlers goes from about approximately 16 to 25 years. The age of their clients is much older and usually the clients are those men above the age of forty or so who cannot make out in the bar. There is a definite

status loss in having to pay a hustler for sex but relatively little status loss in hustling itself. This, of course, is just the opposite role situation than the one that would occur with a heterosexual man and a prostitute. The difference lies in the social value accorded the commodities in the exchange-sexual services and money. In the homosexual world sexual attractiveness is valued above all else and its possessor always has the high status role. In the heterosexual world, money and other economic considerations play this role.

Only one of the interviewees (age 46) has employed a hustler but four of the interviewees have done it at one time or another, usually for primarily economic reasons and secondarily for experiential ones i.e. "to see what it was like". This is to be expected in view of the fact that the interviewees viewed hustling as a convenient way of making money with few social consequences attached.

In terms of possible involvement with the police, hustling is actually a rather safe type of activity. Only one interviewee had been questioned by the police while hustling. The author gained the impression, although he was not able to substantiate it, that there was an almost standard practice of financial pay offs to the police by the regular hustlers and payment in terms of sexual services by the occasional hustler. Such an arrangement would presumably be satisfactory to both hustler and police for different reasons.

In the BathsQuote:

The following excerpt is rough description of the author's conversation with his guide upon entering a homo--sexual bath:

- A: "Oh my God, this towel's too small, Jay!"
- G: "Whadaya mean, its too small...its supposed to be small.. you wanna show your buns, don't cha?"
- A: "Well,ah...no..I mean I'd rather look a bit, er...con-servative."
- G: "How the hell can you look conservative dressed in a towel, Jesus, you psychologists!"
- A: "What happens if this falls off?"
- G: "Then you can carry it. Its not too heavy."
- A: "I knew this research project wasn't going to be easy, but this!"
- G: "Whataya mean, this?"
- A: "Walking around practically in the nude in a gay bath house is what I mean."
- G: "Oh, don't worry. Believe me, not everyone wants to jump in bed with you."
- A: "Well, at least that's some relief."
- G: "No, there have only been seven who wanted to so far".
- A: "Seven? But we've only been here for two minutes. No-body's said anything to me. How do you get this figure of seven?"
- G: "Listen, Eisenberg, you keep forgetting where you are. Let me give it to you again. Keep it straight this time, ha,ha,ha--You're in the Continental Baths... there are three floors of gay men here...no one is going to come up to you and say "Pahdon me, but may I have the pleshah of introducin' mahself"..what's going to happen is they first stare at you right between the eyes, then if you look back between the eyes that means that you're in-terested...Now, seven people have looked at you so far... that last one was kinda cute...You sure you don't want to try some of the action?...one teensey weensey blow job wouldn't hurt..."
- A: "Ah, no thanks."
- G: "O.K., but you don't know what you're missing...now see the cute blond over there?"
- A: "Which one?"
- G: "The one who's hanging down to his knees...Jesus... how could you miss him?"

A: "Well, what about him?"

G: "I've been to bed with him three times in the orgy room...I'm trying to remember his name."

A: "Well, people usually don't tell you their names in the orgy room."

A: "What's the orgy room?"

G: "It's this place on the first floor. There are four kingsize beds in it and everybody just climbs on and does their thing. I once saw a threesome in there. Look you really have to understand the set-up here. The first rule is that it's all anonymous. You don't tell anyone your last name. Now on the first floor there's the pool, the restaurant and the locker rooms. There's not too much that goes on there except for the pool. Then upstairs, on the second floor there are the private rooms. If the door's closed then two guys are going at it and don't go in. If it's open then it's o.k. Now if the guy in the room is laying on his back, that means he wants to be blown. If he's laying on his stomach that means he wants to be screwed. Now people are always walking in the corridor. People pick them up and take them back to their rooms and do whatever they're into..."

A: "Why don't the police close the place down?"

G: "Oh Christ, how naive can you be? They pay plenty and besides, the place has become a popular night spot with the straights."

A: "Here!?"

G: "Sure...it's the most in thing in New York...Saturday night they have entertainment and the straights come in and sit in their suits and evening gowns in the section by the door while the gays sit on the other side. They have some of the best entertainment in the city. Did you know that Barbara Streisand was once here, John Davidson, Bette Midler, all of them..."

A: "You're kidding?"

G: "Nope. Check it in 'After Dark'...Well, what do you want to see next? I know a great leather bar over on tenth street."

Quote:

"...The baths are for sex. It's simple...sex... immediate sex...no entanglements, no commitments, no payments. It's just sex. All you want for as long as you can take it. You don't even have to talk. Actually, you don't even have to see the person that you're with...the orgy room is almost pitch in the back...A lot of people I know are concerned about the morality of the thing...A lot of my friends won't go there. They complain that it makes them sick. All

right- I can see that...they keep bitching that impersonal sex doesn't turn them on and I guess its a good idea for them to keep away then. But, morality is a lousy reason for avoiding it...What's immoral about it?...No one gets hurt, no one gets taken advantage of, people just don't play games there. The only thing, absolutely the only thing that counts is what kind of a body you have and what you like to do in bed...People just act different in there, the same people that are in the bars or the street. You'd be amazed at the difference. For example theres one particular bastard who won't condescent to talk to anybody in the bar but in the baths he's the biggest leich in the place...I ghink maybe its because its freer and everyone can relax...there's no expectation of anything at all. You don't even have to say hello to the person the next time you meet in the corridor...

Basically, the "baths", as they are called, refer to a number of establishments, usually catering to several hundred people at a time, whose purpose it is to provide an outlet for immediate use, without entanglements or charge (although there is an admission charge varying from \$3.50 to \$14.00), on a 24 hour a day basis.

The baths are unique. No other word really suffices. If the author retained, despite attempts at psychological objectivity, any capacity to be shocked, it was the baths that produced it.

For the purposes of this project the author was taken on a guided tour of the largest establishment of this type in the United States- the "Continental" in New York City. This establishment consists of three floors. The first floor is devoted to locker rooms, showers, a swimming pool, a restaurant, a barber shop, a night club, a dance floor, a sun room, a steam room, a bar, and an exercise room. The second and third floors, somewhat smaller, consist of long interconnecting corridors, off of which are a great number of small (7'x4') rooms which are furnished solely with a bed and a number of "orgy rooms".

There are two basic options open to a homosexual who visits the baths: He may rent a locker or he may rent a room. If he rents a locker he must have his sexual contacts in the orgy room, in the corridors, in the showers, in any convenient

spot on the floor (except in the restaurant or night club where it is considered declassé and not permitted) or in someone else's room. If he rents a room he can use all of the above places but also has the option of inviting others to his room.

Standard dress is a towel, issued by the management upon admission (a very small towel which has the rather disconcerting habit of constantly falling off).

In the baths sexual contacts are initiated almost completely by body language. There is a minimum of conversation. Standard procedure usually follows the following pattern:

- 1) Exploration: The homosexual walks around the corridors, taking quick glances at what is available.
- 2) Indication of interest: The method used here is a mutual stare directly into the eyes. If the potential partner is interested he will reciprocate by staring back.
- 3) Initial Approach: The active member walks over and touches the passive member either around the genitals, the anus, or orally-depending on sexual preference. If such touching is reciprocated, contract negotiation usually takes place.
- 4) Contract Negotiation: This is extremely simple. Since sexual preference is usually known from the nature of the initial approach, only a brief, confirming question about this may be asked. The rest of the negotiation consists of simply determining a place to go.

There is one slight departure from this pattern. If the

homosexual has rented a room he may leave the door open so that people passing by in the corridor may look in. Sexual preference is then indicated by position. Lying on the stomach indicates a preference for accepting the partner's penis anally. Lying on the back indicates an oral preference. Lying on the side indicates flexibility.

At any step the contract may be aborted. Thus, at step two an individual can end the interaction by avoiding staring. At step four he makes use of the standard phrase "What time is it?", implying that he has to leave.

Virtually all of the interactions in the baths are chained sequences and subject of the "breaking" or "initiation" cues with one exception: the orgy room. Each room is provided with a number of huge beds and a complete free for all goes on here. Any one who wants to can jump in and try to find a suitable appendage or orifice.

The clientele that visits the baths seems to show about the same age distribution as that of the bars. Physical attractiveness is, however, considerably greater because of the fact that this (and general sexual preference) are the only significant variables and those who are not considered attractive will generally not find a partner (unless they are willing to play the passive role in anal intercourse).

The author was unable to secure any direct indication of socioeconomic status but interview subjects report that this runs a wide gamut although the majority of the patrons are middle-class. Age relevant behavior is opposite to that in the street scene and the bars: Those who are older or less

attractive tend to play the more passive roles.

Seventeen of the 25 interviewees have visited the baths. In 16 of these cases knowledge of this setting derived from word of mouth. In one case location was determined through an advertisement. Of the seventeen who have visited the baths, 12 have done so more than once and 9 use them as a regular outlet. They describe the basis for picking partners there as "attractiveness", "availability", and "sexual preference". None considered "intelligence" or "personality" to be particularly significant. "Looking safe" was not a factor.

Interviewees describe the advantages of the baths as follows: "immediate sex-as much as you can take", "no commitment", "no hassle over conversation", "variety", "freedom from harassment", and "constant availability". Disadvantages were listed as: "absolute impersonality", "anonymity", "frustration of meeting someone you really like because you can't get to know him in other ways", and "chance of catching the crabs or V.D."

There is no detectable harassment by the authorities at the baths. This is widely known and the most common assumption is that pay-offs are made to those in a position to oversee this type of activity. Drugs are ostensibly prohibited by the management but when they are discovered a quiet, tactful and polite intervention is made.

Attitude of the clientel toward the management is very favorable, especially because of the other activities connected with the baths and the non-sexual amusements provided. One of the interview subjects claimed that the Continental Club "provided some of the most fantastic entertainment on the Eastern Seaboard".. The author found this difficult to believe but after checking some back issues of "After Dark" (a Boston-based literary magazine catering mainly to a homosexual clientel) was able to confirm the fact that this statement was not overly exaggerated. Apparently, the Continental is one of the "in" places in New York. Every Saturday night the nightclub is divided into two sections-one for the heterosexuals who come in full dress regalia and one for the bath patrons who take some time off from their sexual activities to watch someone else perform. Among the entertainers who have appeared at the baths are Barbara Streisand, Bette Midler and John Davidson. Indeed, probably the most unique and interesting part of the study was attending a performance by Jill Corey (dressed only in a woefully small towel) opposite approximately 120 ladies and gentlemen dressed in evening wear.

In the BarsQuote:

"...its the most incredibly competitive thing you can imagine. I feel like I'm being judged in some kind of a perverted beauty contest and the winner gets a trick for the night. That's the meat rack though. I'm the meat. I display myself on the rack and the studs buy. If I look good I get bought. If I don't then I go home alone. It's hard to make out in the bars for me because I'm not that good looking...Oh, I'm average enough but people rarely come up to me and start a conversation. If I want a trick I have to be fairly aggressive about it..."

Quote:

"...I really like the bars...I guess I have an easy time of it because of the way I look. Blue-eyed blonds are in and I get plenty of tricks but then there's the other side of the coin. I always wonder whether someone really likes me or just the way I look and also I'm shy and in the bar a lot of people say that I'm stuck up when it's not so. Then there are a lot of people who won't talk to me in the bar even though I know them and hang with them outside because if they stand next to me everyone cruises me and they don't score. Either that or they say that everyone figures they're trying to pick me up and they would have no competition..."

Quote:

"....It's exciting. I feel a real thrill when I go to bed with someone new. There's always the possibility that this might be the one, if you know what I mean... At the bar I meet a lot of new people. Its a really exciting thing to cruise someone to see if you can pick them up. Its like watching television, only its for real. I mean, some people sit home and play scrabble or monopoly. Why not play for real? Besides that, I have a few drinks, talk to my friends, catch up on the latest dirt and I really have a good time....I have a good job, obviously I don't have any family obligations so why can't I have a good time?"

Quote:

"...I can't stomach the bar. It seems so ridiculous sometimes. Someone comes up to talk to you and they pretend to be interested in conversation but its perfectly obvious what they want. Its a game. The idea is to look attractive and pick someone up...So in a bar its civilized and the people talk instead of grabbing each other's cock in the baths...But all the time when I'm talking to someone I keep saying to myself 'When can I stop?' I know that I'm not really interested in talking to them and I don't think they're really interested in talking to me. Its just something that you go through..."

Quote:

...There must be more to life than bars. That really bugs me because bars are a very bad place to get to know anyone. People aren't themselves because they're all so nervous about trying to look attractive. The whole thing is insane. Its like a contest and its impossible to relax. Not only that but its dark, its dingy, half the people are soused and the other half are strutting like peacocks. What kind of a place is that to develop any kind of a relationship with someone?"

Quote:

"...Everybody always is going to tell you that they hate the bars. Everybody bithces about it. The only reason that they hate the bars is because they try to pick up tricks there and they get desperate. They act like their life depended on picking up a trick that night. I used to be that way and I always had a lousy time. Then I started to figure, "What the hell, if it happens, it happens." ...After that I really had a good time. When I stopped displaying myself I really began to relax and I could go over and talk to people. I mean talk to them, not just like I was trying to pick them up...I began to get a reputation as someone who's interesting and I'd get introduced to a lot of people on that basis...To enjoy the bar you have to know what its about but that doesn't mean that you have to agree with it..."

The bars are the central gathering place of the homosexual community. They are the focal point at which community interaction occurs. They are the meeting place for sexual liaisons. They are the gathering places where friends meet, gossip is exchanged, where lovers go for a Saturday night out. It is in the bars that new homosexuals are most often exposed to the homosexual community. It is in the bars that drugs may be bought, the services of prostitutes contracted for, and news of the latest events obtained.

The author worked as a coat-check in a homosexual bar for four months in order to have a chance to have a close-hand look at the interactions that occur there and in order to be able to talk to homosexuals in one of their "natural settings" on a wide variety of topics concerning homosexual life. Much of the data in this and other chapters was obtained as a result of that experience.

The activities in a bar are divided into three main categories: social, business and sexual. Let us consider them in this order:

Social activities: The night at the bar for homosexuals is in many ways equivalent to a "night with the boys" among heterosexuals. In both cases the participants relax, they "let their hair down", they may engage in frank sexual talk, and their behavior may be considerably "freer" than it is during the day when they are faced with the need of maintaining a certain degree of social "facade". Of course the "night with the boys" can occur in a large number of settings

while among homosexuals the fact that it occurs in a bar puts a slight limitation on the interactions. Still, groups of friends will frequently arrange to meet at the bar with no particular social objective in mind other than to have a good time. Sometimes patrons will schedule parties of birthday celebrations which take place at the bar. Additionally, the bar runs its own social activities. Dancing takes place almost every night (although there are some bars where this is not permitted). Contests are frequent. For example, the bar that the author worked at would have a lavish bi-weekly show (at considerable expense to the owners): the bar next door would have a weekly sing-along and the bar three blocks down the street would have a weekly buffet and talent contest. The author was able to witness a homosexual version of the "Dating Game" television show and a most unusual and unquestionably unique version of "The Price Is Right" (this took place at a sado-masochistic bar where "slaves" were being auctioned off), several drag shows, a muscle contest, etc. Such activities are quite frequent at some bars along with free buffets and free sexual contacts, and are some of main influence drawing patrons to the bars.

In the heterosexual society there is a wide diversification of social functions but in the homosexual community almost all of these (with the exception of private parties and events sponsored by gay liberation groups) are held in the bar. The reasons for this are primarily the need to maintain a certain amount of anonymity, the lack of other places available, and the fact that sexual contacts

are to be had at the bar as an added inducement. Secondary reasons include the fact that a gay bar is basically a business enterprise in an incredibly competitive field and such businesses actively compete for patronage by offering an often lavish spread of food and entertainment. This is especially true when a bar first opens and is trying to attract a basic clientel.

Business activities: Owning and managing a homosexual bar is a very risky proposition. Not only does the owner have to make payments to the police and various "protection" agencies but he also has to protect his clients from hostile persons who may infiltrate the bar and attack or annoy the patrons. This is usually done, at considerable expense, by hiring a number of burly bodyguards and bouncers. Parking must also be provided since few homosexuals want to walk through a long distance in an urban area to a bar and will tend to pick a bar with a parking area adjoining it.

The owner must also maintain the goodwill of his client in other ways. Hiring the right bartenders is one of the prime ways of doing this. Such bartenders are usually possessed of exceptional physical or personal attributes and if they move from one bar to another their devotees usually follow them.

The owner must also allow other activities to take place in his bar e.g. drugs and prostitution (since many people

will visit the establishment specifically for this purpose) while at the same time keeping them within discreet enough limits so that these activities will not force the authorities to take action. This is a job that requires a considerable amount of finesse. Let us deal with these activities one by one:

a) Prostitution: Prostitution flourishes in a gay bar but it is of a very specific nature in that it is directed toward those "older" patrons (roughly 40 and over) who are unable to find a "trick" for the night. Such prostitutes are almost always discreet and there are very few cases of the prostitute blackmailing or beating up the customer since prostitutes depend on the bar as a source of income and such activity will quickly cause them to be barred from such an establishment or turned over to the police by the owner. Such a prostitute, from what the author has been able to gather, is usually a homosexual who is in need of money and will trick with someone older than they would ordinarily go with for a "fee". At other times they function as any other homosexual would in the bar and therefore they are not distinguishable in the same sense that a prostitute on the street would be. Since they cannot be readily identified they are rarely approached as such and the homosexual who wants to take the active role in securing

a prostitute will have to look elsewhere (to a call-boy service or to the street). The prostitute thus takes the active role in approaching the customer. The usual pattern is that he simply sits down or stands near the customer and begins a conversation. Since there are so few older people who frequent a bar and since attractiveness is considered to be almost completely a function of youth and looks, an older person who is approached by a young attractive homosexual will almost immediately assume that the approached is not a gratuitous one. The patron will then, if he is interested, indicate that he is willing to offer some type of inducement to secure the sexual services of the younger partner. To the author's surprise such inducements are rarely made in concrete form but rather are very vague and both parties usually continue to pretend that the interaction is based on affection or mutual desire. The reason for such pretense seems mainly to be that the bar, unlike the street, is a very public situation and it is embarrassing for the older partner to have to admit that he cannot secure one of the abundant sexual contacts on his own and for the prostitute, who, the majority of the time has another role as a regular patron of the bar, to engage in this type of activity in front of his friends.

b) Drugs: Bars frequently serve as a source of drug supply especially for amyl nitrate ("poppers") and marijuana, which are the two drugs used most frequently by homosexuals while

engaging in sexual activity. "Poppers" are often carried quite openly in a small vial around the neck, somewhat transparently disguised as a pendant while marijuana is often stuffed into regulation cigarettes and smoked in the bathroom. The only time the owner will interfere is if the smell becomes bad enough to be noticeable and therefore subject to action by the police. Because of the fact that the authorities are given a certain amount of "cash lubrication" things usually go smoothly and drug raids are almost never carried out on gay bars since this would frighten away the customers and be a disaster for everyone involved, including those who are paid off.

Drugs may also be purchased at a gay bar if one is fairly well known and a frequent customer. During the author's stint checking coats he was approached no less than thirty-one times in relation to obtaining drugs.

c) Other business activity: Businesses run by either patrons of the bar or heterosexual businessmen who want to attract a homosexual clientele are often advertised in the bar. This occurs either by public announcement, by word of mouth of the bartenders or by written sign. Many homosexuals simply assume that businesses which advertise in such a manner will be friendly and non-hostile toward them and so may go to quite some length to patronize such a business. Such ads are therefore very profitable.

Additionally there seems to be a cooperative relationship between the owners of various homosexual bars within a city even though competition is considerable in terms of attracting customers. Such cooperation may be based on several factors: most bar owners are gay and there may be a mutual cohesion based upon being a member of an "out" group; a realization that cooperation may have some benefits in terms of keeping pay-offs to a reasonable level; a realization that most of the customers will visit all the bars in a given area anyway; etc.

Sexual activities: To "pick up a trick" is the main objective of most homosexuals who go into a bar on a given night. Most bars are arranged so that almost all the customers are in plain view of each other. For this purpose there are long rails around the side of the bar room where customers may lean. This side area is known as the "meat rack" since its purpose is to allow the customers to display themselves by "posing" in a rather seductive position in the hope that someone will come along and start a conversation. Homosexual bars are unique in that unlike most clubs, except for discotechs, the vast majority of the customers (especially on a crowded night) will be standing up. Of the eight hundred or so patrons who pass through a Springfield bar in the course of an evening, less than seventy-five will be sitting down at any one time.

The series of behaviors involved in making a sexual con-

tact is rather different from that which is followed in the streets or the baths in the sense that it is much more variable and the steps are much more fluid. This is mainly due to the fact that the greater verbal nature of the interaction in a bar leads to more variability and fewer stereotyped contingencies. The rough sequence of events, in so far as the behavior can be put into any identifiable sequence is as follows: exploration, indication of interest, further indication of interest, tentative approach and contact negotiation.

- 1) Exploration: The homosexual will usually take a "tour" of the bar to see who he is attracted to and what the competition is. Such tours are usually not accompanied by eye contact but rather by a more general visual appraisal of the situation. The walk, however, is distinctively different from that of a person walking to the other side of the bar for some specific purpose and serves as a "cue" to other homosexuals such that it indicates that the patron is "available".
- 2) Indication of interest: The homosexual taking an active role will position himself perhaps seven to eight feet from the person he is interested in and stare directly into his eyes, sometimes constantly, sometimes intermittently. The homosexual in the passive role may return the stare if he is mutually interested. If such stares are not returned the contact is soon broken off.

3) Further indication of interest: Step 2 may sometimes be skipped entirely by those homosexuals who are fairly aggressive or for whom staring makes uncomfortable. Step 3 may then be an initial step or may follow such staring. The aim of step 3 is to start a conversation. Such a conversation is usually, but not always initiated by the person who first started staring. The conversational opener is usually a general question e.g. "How are you tonight?" but for the more imaginative it may be almost anything. Such conversation may continue from five minutes to several hours. If either one of the partners decides at this point that he isn't interested he will politely excuse himself from the conversation. This is usually taken as a clear indication of disinterest and, unless the other participant is quite aggressive, the contact will be broken off. If there is mutual interest, on the other hand, the pair will reduce the distance to considerably closer than normal conversational distance and then begin step 4.

4) Tentative approach: Most homosexuals want the minimum of ambiguity when asking a prospective sexual contact if they would like to accompany him for the night. This desire is related to the fact that in the homosexual's view sexual acceptance is a potent indicator of personal worth. Therefore an overt rejection might be somewhat traumatic and is to be avoided. Thus they have developed several

nonverbal indications of sexual interest. One of them is the above-mentioned staring and decrease in conversational distance but on a crowded night in the bar these may often happen anyway and so other, more definitive, indications are now employed. These consist almost entirely of physical contact. One of the partners may begin by grabbing the other's arm or shoulder to make a point. The other will then reciprocate if he is interested. These type of touches are done in the most casual way possible so that their psychological intent can then be denied if the other party does not prove to be interested. Gradually, the level and intimacy of touch will increase and will usually end up with one of the partners holding the other in some way. Often an "excuse" for initiating such intimate touching will be an invitation to do a slow dance. One partner will then begin to rub the others back and if interested the other may signal such interest by reciprocating. All this time there is no commitment that cannot be "undone"

5) Contract negotiation; This usually consists of a simple request asking the partner home. It is sometimes euphemistically phrased e.g. "Would you like to come over and have a drink?", but the intent in such cases is quite clear. In the bar scene, unlike the street scene or the baths, there is no specific indication of sexual preference as a

matter of course. This occurs for several reasons: for one, the sexual preferences of most of the patrons are already known or can be found out from a mutual friend by word of mouth; two, many homosexuals are assumed by their partner to be adaptable (i.e. can take any of several sexual roles) and indeed, the interviewees report that this is the case; three, it gives the impression that the partner is only interested in sex and it is precisely this impression that he wants to avoid. This last issue is one of the biggest paradoxes in the homosexual scene. Although it is considered perfectly acceptable to have impersonal sex, there is a constant effort, in some contexts, to personalize it. This occurs for several reasons: it allows the participants to believe that they are not acting in a "lustful" way but rather on the basis of what they consider "justifiable" emotional feelings; it allows the participants to hold out some hope that perhaps this contact will lead to a lover relationship; it serves as a mask to prevent the true nature of the interaction (sexual) from becoming too obvious so that if one of the parties is rejected he may claim to himself that it was not a sexual rejection.

The naive observer would assume that, considering the general motivations of the patrons, the fact that promiscuity

is sanctioned, and the large number of people in the bar, that most customers would manage to find a "trick". This is not so and the actual ratio is probably closer to 1:3.

The reasons for this are several:

- a) many homosexuals fear rejection and so do not initiate approaches.
- b) a disproportionate number of approaches are initiated towards a small number of extremely attractive people.
- c) some of the patrons are lovers or otherwise unavailable.
- d) criteria for selection tend to be narrow.

Standards of attractiveness: In many ways the bar operates as a free market whereby sexual services are exchanged on the basis of the participant finding someone who has a "market-value" equal or better than his own. Such "market-value" is based on youth, body build, looks and general attractiveness. Personality and intelligence are factors but they are not the primary ones. Wealth or job position is virtually non-important. Those who are over the age of 35-40 will have a great deal of trouble locating sexual partners unless they are extremely aggressive and even then they will probably not get someone who the majority of homosexuals would consider particularly attractive. The reader will find a most interesting discussion of this issue in the section on the "single-standard criterion" and "aging" in the chapter of "How The Homosexual Subculture Is Detrimental To Its Members".

All of the interviewees have been to bars and 20 out of

25 had their first social contact with other homosexuals there. They came initially to the bar via three routes. Most (N15) heard about the bar from one of their sexual contacts. Three would walk in accidentally, thinking it was a heterosexual bar, and two were brought to the bar by friends who suspected that they were homosexual and who knew of the existence of the bar. The five who did not have their first social contact there heard about its existence from the people with whom they did have their first such contact and quickly began to frequent the bar. The new bar patron is treated with considerable deference and sympathy by those who are already there, especially if the new patron happens to be young and attractive. He will find many sympathetic (and eager) ears willing to explain the "scene" to him and will have little trouble picking up the required role behavior.

Since the bar is the center of homosexual social activity the average homosexual visits the bar quite frequently. For the interview sample this was an average of 2.7 times a week. Some homosexuals probably spend from fifteen to twenty dollars a week in such establishments and for many the amount is considerably more.

Age-relevant behavior is noticeable in that those who are older and less attractive tend to take the more active roles. The reason for this is obvious and is simply that if they don't

they will be passed over for the more attractive males present. This is true with the exception of those older males who prefer to be approached by prostitutes.

There are various types of bars which serve different types of clientels but the degree of diversification in any given bar varies from city to city. In Springfield, Massachusetts, the number of bars is so small that all bars serve a heterogeneous clientele. In New York City, however, the number of homosexual bars is well over a hundred and the type of bar that a patron will frequent depends on his age, his sexual preference and his social preference. One type of bar, for example, popularly called an S&M bar, caters to those who have a preference for sadism and masochism in their sexual interactions. Usually the dress in such institutions is quite distinctive and consists of leather or denim. The wearing of keys hanging from the belt is a cue to the orientation of the wearer. Those worn on the left indicate sadism, those on the right, masochism. On the West Coast however, the situation is reversed. It is interesting that the personality of the patron often does not seem to go with the clothes. Although there is a distinctive emphasis on masculine "dress", mannerisms are often extremely feminine, especially in those of masochistic

orientation. Perhaps affecting the rough masculine "look" of the S&M crowd is a compensation for what some homosexuals perceive as their internal feminine orientation or perhaps it may be an overcompensation for the "unacceptability" of two males engaging in affectionate relationships. Masochism may also perhaps represent a desire on the part of the homosexual for punishment for his "lustful" or "evil" acts. The author did not really have a great deal of contact with this segment of the homosexual population and it is therefore difficult to speculate on a viable explanation for this phenomenon. He was, however, able to briefly visit such a bar and found the standard patterns of interaction to be very strong and much the same as the "regular" bar except that a) there was less touching and more verbal communication and; b) there usually seemed to be direct inquiries as to sexual preference in the contract negotiation stage. It was also almost always true that the masochistic member of the pair controlled the interaction. This would be a necessity since, otherwise, the masochist could easily get into a situation that was "more than he bargained for".

Other types of bars cater to different sectors of the homosexual population. There are bars that attract an almost exclusively professional clientel. There are bars that attract the "Queens" and the "glitter crowd". There are bars that at-

tract upper middle class working people and there are bars that attract older homosexuals. The latter are called "wrinkl rooms" and are usually highly segregated. The average homosexual cannot get in unless he is accompanied by a current patron and, even then, he must have a fairly discrete appearance.

Some bars have a "back room" where overt sexual activity goes on, much as in the baths. Such activity, however, is declassé in the front room although heavy necking and petting is considered perfectly all right. The reader may refer to the section dealing with sexual norms in the chapter on "Mores and Morals" for more detail.

Addendum: community spirit

During the four months that the owner worked checking coats one of the bars in Springfield was blown up and one, the one at which he was employed, was burned down by an arsonist. The first incident was generally thought to have caused by the owner in order to collect the insurance but the second was believed to have been a genuine case of arson since the bar was at the height of its popularity and financial success.

The reaction to this burning was remarkable. First, there was a great deal of indignation and demands to various police authorities that they find the culprit. After this the reaction was mainly one of helping to rebuild the bar in the shortest possible time. The general reaction was very similar to that which is usually encountered by a temple or church that has suffered a fire. Offers of help poured in, both financial and personal. Reconstruction was started and many homosexuals with skills in a given area helped, absolutely free of charge.

They were given some free food and liquor by the owners, but this was insubstantial when compared with the value of their labor in a free market. The rebuilding this bar became a Saturday afternoon activity, within the homosexual community. In view of the fact that the bar was a business establishment and furthermore, an establishment that made a great deal of profit from its customers, this type of sentiment was remarkable. The reason for it seemed to be that in many ways the community and its members seemed to personalize the bar, to think of it as a protected haven from a rather hostile world. Realistically they also regarded it as the only locale they had in which to conduct the majority of their social activities. When the bar was reopened its business was even more spectacular than previously and the owners threw a number of parties to celebrate.

In general, the feelings of customers about a bar is very different from the way most heterosexuals feel about a "watering hole". It is more akin to the way a member feels about his country club, a churchgoer about his church, a fraternity member about his fraternity. Such feeling illustrates, once again, the basic point of this report--that homosexuality is much more than a strictly sexual orientation but is a wide-ranging social phenomenon.

On Mores And Morals

Quote:

"...When you ask me that (how homosexual society is different from straight society), I don't really know how to answer. Its a tough question. There's a million ways: there's a much freer sexual climate, there's less importance around money, more on looks and body, all the things that have to do with women and children are gone, so that's different. Getting older is a lot harder when you're gay and other homosexuals haven't got much respect if you're past forty...That's really bad--to be old. They call them D.O.M.'s especially if they try to pick up chicken..."

Quote:

"...The thing is that there aren't strict rules because there is no one there to enforce them. About the only thing that's an absolute no-no is to hurt someone physically and then, even if that happens, what's going to happen? The person may be barred from the bar for awhile and people may whisper "Don't go home with him", so he won't get tricks. But that's about it. No one is going to call the police because who knows what might happen..."

In the sense that the homosexual community only partially shares a set of values and meanings espoused by the larger culture of which it is a part, it may be viewed as a subculture of that society. It is extremely interesting in this regard to take a closer look at some of the unique normative standards and social roles in the homosexual community. Before doing that, however, it should be recognized that the gay "community" is a loosely organized set of bars, friendship cliques, and other associations without many of the geographical, ethnic or racial ties that characterize other communities. While it does have certain mores it has few ways of enforcing them except by the assignment or removal of status. Such status usually carries no definite privileges or proscriptions but rather relates to the approval of others and the ease with which a homosexual may obtain access to certain groups of individuals.

Internalization, on the other hand, is far more effective than status removal and this is the main means used to insure that the homosexual mores are followed. It is important to realize that when the homosexual enters gay society he is often confused and is disoriented. He quickly internalizes whatever normative standards he finds around him. This is especially true because he often enters in with a very negative self-concept and the normative standards of the community provide a great relief for him.

Let us now consider some of these standards and values:

The value of gayness: The primary norm of the homosexual community is: To be gay is good. This is, of course, diametrically opposed to the norm of the larger society which views homosexuality with suspicious neutrality at best. The young homosexual entering into the community quickly learns this norm. He learn it by observing the open interaction of other homosexuals in bars, by listening to their conversation, by observing the fact that there are hundreds of others like him who seem to be enjoying themselves, by seeing analogues of straight institutions (e.g. marriage), and by picking up the general atmosphere, of which shame is not a part.

Attitudes towards individual straights: The attitude of homosexuals towards heterosexuals does not seem to parallel the attitude of the latter towards the former. There is generally no derision of straight status as far as any individual goes. Straights who come into a bar will be the object of curiosity (if, indeed, they can be detected at all), some speculation as to whether they are really straight, and some wariness but unless they are acting in an inappropriate manner or clearly making fun of the bar patrons, they will be left alone.

To a certain extent, the attitude of homosexuals meeting straights on the former's ground is understandable: the straights are hopelessly outnumbered and unfamiliar with the role requirements of the situation, thus giving the gays a substantial advantage. The author found himself "unhassled" in the parts of the research where his heterosexual identity was known. He was

sometimes asked a few pointed questions as to why he was in the situation and whether his study would be "sympathetic" to gays or not. After that, no special notice seemed to be taken.

Attitudes towards straight society: While attitudes towards individual straights are quite open and tolerant, attitudes toward straight society are considerably more negative. There would seem to be three distinct sets of values toward straight society depending upon what subset of the homosexual subculture one looks at. Those with the most extreme attitudes are the "gay liberationists" who believe that straight society is oppressive and must be actively changed by means of political tactics. Such liberationists often openly declare to friends, associates and employers that they are gay and take active steps, e.g. court suits, to deal with the consequences.

The second group, which constitutes the vast majority of homosexuals, regards the straight society with considerable wariness and tries to steer clear of conflict with it whenever possible. To this end, they are reasonably discreet about their sexual orientation and do not flaunt it in public (although they may inform a few close friends or relatives). They are openly a part of the homosexual community, however, and they do frequent bars, clubs and parties as long as there is reasonable protection from discovery (and there usually is).

The third group consists of those homosexuals who, more or less "take the role of the aggressor" and espouse the values of the society, avoiding contact with the more open and active homosexual

institutions (e.g. bars) but coming into contact with the community in peripheral ways (e.g. street cruising). They may identify themselves as homosexuals or they may be the types of persons who are described in Humphrey's "Tearoom Trade" (57) and are often married or otherwise heterosexually involved individuals who cannot really "afford" to be publically observed in a clearly non-ambiguous homosexual setting. Since the actual danger of discovery by the authorities in a "tearoom" is far greater than at a homosexual bar we may presume that one of the crucial factors that leads people to tearooms instead of bars is internal guilt which would produce a large amount of shame in a public situation. Such guilt may also lead to an unconscious wish to be punished, for the "lustfulness" of the acts and hence may lead some individuals to pick the more peripheral and dangerous aspects of the gay community.

Sexuality: It is in this area that the homosexual community is markedly different from the larger society. Besides the obvious fact that the gender of the desired sexual object is male there is also the fact that there are almost no prohibitions on sexual behavior and those that there are are very loosely enforced. This situation is partially a function of the looseness of the community structure and partially a fact that sanctions are not formalized because there are no "sanction enforcers" i.e. authorities, within the community. The following differences can be described:

First, all types of sexual behavior are permitted (oral, anal, sado-masochistic, etc.) although there is a certain degree of segregation according to sexual preference. Thus, for example,

sado-masochists may have certain "leather" bars. In addition, there is no status differentiation relating to any special type of sexual activity or preference. This seems to hold true even for sexual behavior which most outside observers might regard as "feminine" or "passive" e.g. being the receiver in anal intercourse.

Second, rules regarding time and place are only loosely followed. In general, the one rule is that overtly sexual behavior which involves possible nudity or orgasm should not be done in public. The word "public", however, is loosely interpreted and would not include private parties, cruising areas, etc. While those who do engage in such sex also may suffer a slight loss of status, becoming known as "cheap" or "trashy", indiscretions are frequent and no permanent loss of status usually follows. Someone who does make a practice of making his sexual behavior more visible than the norm for the particular subsection of the community involved (and such norms seem to vary somewhat from bar to bar, friendship clique to friendship clique) may suffer a certain loss of reputation but will not usually be excluded from interaction with others, especially if he is more physically attractive than average.

Third, there is no presupposed link between emotional involvement and sexual activity. It is accepted and reinforced by the community that overt sexuality is entirely acceptable without an emotional basis. There is no disgrace of any kind in picking up a "trick" for the night without having further involvement with that person after that. There are, however, penalties for holding

out the promise of emotional involvement in return for sex in a long-term relationship (i.e. "leading a person on") and such penalties seem, in general, more severe than in the wider heterosexual society. . This type of behavior is looked upon with some severity by the gay community and the person who engages in it will soon acquire a very bad reputation which will precede him to the bar.

Fourth, there are no real sanctions placed on promiscuous behavior. Attitudes toward promiscuity range from a slightly negative one to a uniquely positive one. In general, the feeling of the gay community towards promiscuity closely resembles the feeling of the male heterosexual community toward that type of behavior in its own ranks i.e. the homosexual who seduces a great many others is seen as potent and desirable (so long as he does not go about it in a blatant or boorish way) while the homosexual who "can't get a trick" is seen as lacking in some quality.

Fifth, an "incest taboo" is loosely followed which, generally speaking, prescribes that a homosexual does not go to bed with his close friends. While it is often true that such friends are first met in a sexual encounter, it is accepted that, should a friendship develop, sexual activities between the two people involved should cease. When this happens the people involved are known as "sisters".

The function of the incest taboo is apparently to protect friendship cliques and other associations from the conflicts and jealousies that would be caused were the members to freely have sexual contact with each other. In practice the taboo is often

violated and the sanctions imposed may range from none at all to the two offenders being kicked out of the group. It should be noted, however, that this prohibition seems to be internalized early in the homosexual's career and so is usually obeyed. If two people choose to disobey it they may work their way around it by a simple redefinition of roles i.e. becoming lovers or declaring to their friends that they are now a "couple". This still maintains the integrity of the group because it encapsulates the couple as a unit and does not alter the contingencies about who they go to bed with who in the group (except for the couple, who may go to bed with each other).

The incest taboo may have another, slightly more complicated, alternative explanation. Much of the homosexual's self-image is based on sexual acceptance by others. If a sexual relationship were to continue between two close friends for an extended period it would, when and if one of the partners decided he did not want to continue the relationship on a sexual basis although he wanted to keep the other person as a friend, involve considerable overtones of rejection. It is the author's belief that many homosexuals have a great deal of trouble separating sexual disinterest from total personal and social rejection. Therefore a homosexual who was involved in such a termination of sexual contact might suffer a moderately severe trauma, especially if the partner was a "significant other". One way to avoid this trauma is for each participant to

signal himself internally, at some early point in the relationship, that sexual involvement must cease and to attribute the necessity for cessation to his own desires rather than the other party. Hence the incest taboo.

There is no exact parallel of the incest taboo in heterosexual society. Usually the question does not come up, except within families or between close blood relations, since friendship groups are, for the most part, homogeneous as far as sex goes. This is, to a degree, not so for married couples but in that situation the marriage bonds between couples establish prohibitions and specify the contingencies sufficiently so that an incest taboo is not necessary.

On sexual characteristics: Youth and physical attractiveness are the most highly attributes in the gay world. The emphasis on these characteristics exceeds, by far, the similar emphasis in the heterosexual community. A homosexual who is young, attractive and reasonably masculine is given preferential treatment in almost every aspect of the gay world. He not only is the first to be asked to "trick" but he can easily gain access to almost any group or clique he desires, regardless of the economic or social make-up of the group. He gets better service, sometimes free, at the bars and his violations from normative standards are looked upon with a great deal of tolerance, if not outrightly ignored. He is usually talked about, his preferences endlessly debated and is often the object of

much envy. It is generally considered a mark of status to have him as a friend and he will have more acquaintances than he can comfortably deal with. To "catch" such a person as a lover is considered by many gays to be the realization of one's life's ambition.

Generally, in sexual and personal interactions that occur between homosexuals, the younger and more attractive participant has the "power". He may be lacking in many other characteristics and attributes relative to the other participant but the subcultural norms define the relevant variable (attractiveness). McCall and Simmons (61) in a discussion of the dynamics of interaction, underscore this point:

"...Power is said to arise from an imbalance in exchange resources...the peculiarities of power in encounters stem from sources relevant to encounters, are largely the same and consist of role support and the various intrinsic and extrinsic reward".

Age: Just as youth and attractiveness is considered extremely desirable, age is viewed as an extreme liability. To use McCall and Simmons' idiom: it severely limits the exchange resources of such an "afflicted" individual-not because such an individual does not have such resources but simply because the resources that he does have are not really relevant to the interaction. Young homosexuals, in fact, rarely associate with other homosexuals past forty or so. Such "oldersters" do not even enter most bars but remain in the homosexual community by means of friendship cliques or those bars and clubs, called "wrinkle rooms" by the younger crowd, which cater specifically to older people. The homosexual community supports this value and maintains this in several ways. Older homosexuals often are excluded from most friendship cliques and if

one is admitted it is almost always on the unspoken condition that he make no sexual advances toward younger members. Older homosexuals are generally assigned to the status of D.O.M. (dirty old man) and should one of them enter a bar and behave in a seductive way (even if he is fairly subtle) he is often ridiculed openly or in whispers. Younger homosexuals who have sexual involvement with those considerably older than themselves will have their status subtly down-graded and questions of their psychological adjustment may be raised. This is true unless there is some emotional involvement between the two, in which case the "deviation" is seen as acceptable.

It can be supposed that there are groups of older homosexuals who have a way of dealing with the negative status assigned them by younger homosexuals. The author, however, was not able to gain access to these groups and has heard only vague rumors of their existence. This, of course, speaks for a considerable degree of segregation imposed by the community.

Women: The mores of the gay community with regard to women are almost nonexistent. They are regarded as simply irrelevant.

They are not usually specifically excluded mainly because there are so few who make any attempt at breaching the barriers. Few women want to be part of a friendship group in which social, physical and emotional considerations are geared around men. Fewer still will enter a bar and on occasions when this does happen they usually quickly realize the nature of the situation and leave.

There is one exception to this irrelevancy and that is for the woman who always may be a close friend of a male who is already involved in the homosexual subculture. Such a woman is usually relegated to the role of "fag-hag". This role carries a stereotype such that the woman is regarded as having some problems relating to heterosexual men and has so chosen to enter the homosexual scene. She will usually have no trouble gaining access to a bar, especially if she is in the company of a male friend or if the bar caters to lesbians (one for who she may be mistaken). Her treatment will depend on how often she is seen and how she reacts to the gay patrons. Usually such a person never really gains complete acceptance except, perhaps, in the group of which her male friend may be a part and then only if he is fairly influential. The partial acceptance such a woman does gain seems to be based on the homosexuals perception of her as having a similar status to his own i. e. having trouble in her societally defined sexual relationships.

Homosexual males who choose to have involvement with women are not usually derided for the fact but are looked upon as being a bit unsure of their sexual orientation and not yet ready for "marriage". Such males would not be excluded from friendship cliques if they chose to join but, understandably, they spend much of their time outside an exclusively gay atmosphere and often cannot put in the time or the effort needed to be a member in good standing.

In contrast to the community's attitude toward heterosexual

women, its attitude toward homosexual women is more negative. They are often characterized as "bull-dykes", implying a certain boorishness and uncouth manner. They are seen as aggressive and threatening, although the reasons for such a stance are unclear since the areas of homosexual men and homosexual women obviously do not cross. Perhaps it may be that the occasionally threatening appearance of some masculine-looking lesbians brings any suppressed anxieties the homosexual may have regarding females to the surface. If one believes the theory that homosexuality reflects "hidden fears of the opposite sex" and if one further assumes that the mechanism behind the development of homosexuality is exposure to a castrating female source followed by avoidance, then the homosexual's attitude towards lesbian women becomes understandable. The history of the men in the interview sample, however, does not seem to bear out this theory. Seventeen of the 25 (68%) made a substantial attempt at heterosexuality, 14 achieved intercourse, and only four described mothers that could be regarded as particularly castrating. Other research evidence supports this. Roesler and Deisher (59), for example, using a sample of 60 male homosexuals, found that 36 (60%) had at least one experience to orgasm with a female and 19 (32%) had such experience with up to nine females. Furthermore, only 6 of the present interviewees described being fearful and uneasy with women and 4 of these were uneasy with almost all their social contacts, including men.

Probably the differential reaction to heterosexual and homosexual women in the bar can be explained on the basis of the social situation without having to bring in unduly complex "causative"

psychodynamic factors: Heterosexual women are almost always invited guests and furthermore take special care not to offend the patrons of a bar. Homosexual women, on the other hand, are aggressively in the bar on their own account. Furthermore, they often realize that they are "intruders" since most bars are more or less structured for a male clientele. They sometimes, but not always, adopt boisterous behavior to compensate for their feelings about the intrusion. Lesbians who do not adopt such behavior are usually quite well tolerated by the males in the bar.

Authority: The homosexual community maintains a wary truce with police and other authorities. The general belief is that pay-offs are frequent since the activities involved are ostensibly illegal (or can be made to appear so) but few arrests or raids are ever seen.

Contact with the authorities is variable and depends almost entirely on the situation. A bar is a relatively safe place in that it is almost never raided. Policemen may be frequently seen inside, however, on their regular tours of duty. This is especially true in recent years (after the politicizing of the gay liberation movement) but was less true fifteen years ago. The attitudes of the community have changed in accordance with this. The older interviewees tend to report concern with authorities while the younger ones were somewhat less concerned.

Homosexual institutions other than bars enjoy varying degrees of

immunity. Private parties are probably so safe as heterosexual parties of the same nature while street cruising is rather risky. Still, even in the latter case the police usually do not arrest the offender.

Despite the fact that there is not too much of a problem with the authorities, stereotypes and beliefs about them tend to be maintained. The functions of such maintenance are several: for one, it tends to solidify and maintain the community; second, it is useful to those in charge of certain institutions, e.g. bars, in controlling the behavior of patrons so that it does not go beyond the point at which the police or political authorities actually will intervene.

It was the impression of some of the older interviewees that beliefs about authorities were becoming less cautious with time. They spoke of constant warnings of "dick in the suds" (detective present) which were formerly common but which are not now.

Sub-cultural affinity: The homosexual community is very conscious of the fact that, as a group, they are largely ostracized. As such, values tend to promote the desirability of sticking together and supporting other homosexuals where at all possible. This extends even to favoring other homosexuals with business or trade and there are organizations e.g. Gay Switchboard in New York City that maintain lists of homosexual tradesmen, plumbers, physicians, etc.

A homosexual who fails to support another in a crucial moment (at least if the situation is one where he doesn't have to expose his own orientation) will be the subject of very negative comment. This is especially true when the aggressor is thought to be heter-

osexual. The reader interested in certain aspects of community solidarity will find an interesting addendum in the chapter "In The Bars" where the rebuilding of a bar by the community is described.

In general, the mores of the homosexual community are vague and loosely defined. To a certain extent, this is to be expected since much of the community revolves around commercial institutions e. g. bars, whose main interest is not in the maintenance of the community, per se, but in doing business. This situation is rapidly changing, however, as various homosexual organizations become more influential and are establishing more definitive norms and codes of conduct. In some cases such organizations are forcing bar owners and other to accept such norms (e.g. transvestism is an acceptable deviation and transvestites should be permitted in bars). The coherence of the homosexual community seems to be on the increase and likely will be investigated by students of the homosexual scene in coming years.

On Lovers And Other StrangersQuote:

"...My lover is the world to me, he's everything. We live together, we sleep together, we're a lot like a married couple, really. Well, actually there might be some differences... we love each other very much, that's no different... Don and I are both what you might call realists. Gay lovers don't usually last more than two or three years. I realized that once I'd been out for a while... I think most lovers know when they get together that it won't be a lifelong thing. Not because there isn't the commitment--there is. Its a matter of other pressures... Well, you have two males who ar both horny and have been used to getting their rocks off. There's a lot of temptation in the bars and there's a hell of a lot of opportunity too. Imagine you were married and you could go out and pick up a girl to have sex with at the drop of a hat--no obligation, no trouble, no money, no nothing--how long would you stay married? You really have to unerstand the situation... Don and I had a long talk and we decided it would be better to try and stand up under the pressures than to trick out. So we don't but sometimes its very tempting... Now there are other things that make it hard to stay together. For example, both Don and I work fifty miles apart and there's a possibility that Don may have to move. Now I would go if that happened but take Ronnie and Glenn... Glenn just got a great job in Boston but Ronnie con't leave. In a regular marriage that wouldn't happen.. The woman would follow the man... The other thing that makes it hard is that you can't really be open. If they school board found out that Don and I were lovers I'd be fired off the bat. Can you imagine a queer teaching in Don's room so that the neighbors will see the lights go off at different timew... We've been together for five years, even with all the hassle, and its been the best five years of my life..."

Quote:

"...This life can be awfully lonely and I've always wanted a lover. Being lonely isn't enough reason though;... Sometimes I can't stand it its like one trick after another and what the hell does it get me? A penis is a penis is a penis. Christ, I ought to be Gertrude Stein. Its the same conversation, even the sex gets dull... There's no permanence. You know, its like people go in and out of your life and you have no home base if you're alone. Being lonely like that is the worst thing about being gay and a lover is a protection against that..."

Since homosexuality it too often viewed as a strictly sexual phenomenon, it is not often realized that homosexual "marriages" (described by homosexuals as "having a lover") do take place. This type of marriage arrangement shares many of the same psychological and social qualities of heterosexual marriage yet there are distinct and significant differences which go beyond the sexual sphere.

Almost all homosexuals seem to desire some form of gay marriage. This was so for 24 out of the 25 in the interview sample and for almost all the other people with whom the author was able to talk. Generally, they felt that such a marriage would serve several functions: it would provide a stable affectional relationship; it would help eliminate the frequent and often frustrating search for sexual partners; it would provide companionship; it would provide relief from the loneliness of the homosexual existence; and it would give the participants a certain degree of additional status among their friends. One factor that did not seem to be a prime motivation, as it often is, especially for females in the heterosexual world, was economics. Since the participants involved were both male and both were usually employed, this is understandable.

The author feels that there may be several additional factors involved in the almost universal desire on the part of homosexuals for a gay marriage which the subjects did not verbalize. These are:

- 1) In the homosexual world much of the interactional processes are based on the purely sexual attributes of the people involved. Since most homosexuals, like the human race as a whole, are average

looking and not startlingly attractive, this leaves many of them with a deficient self-concept. (See the discussion of the "single-standard criterion" in the chapter on "How The Homosexual Subculture Is Detrimental To Its Members.") It is the author's belief that many homosexuals unconsciously view securing a lover as a validation of self, as a confirmation that they are, indeed, worthy human beings by the homosexual normative standard. Of course, the same psychological mechanism probably applies to heterosexuals except that the base that self-worth is judged upon is considerably wider and includes many qualities besides sex appeal. The fact that it is wider is of crucial significance because it means that the heterosexual of average physical attractiveness can obtain psychological confirmation of an adequate self-concept by capitalizing on some of his other characteristics while the homosexual will have considerable difficulty doing this because of the disproportionate emphasis put on sexuality. The existence of such an emphasis is true for the homosexual subculture but probably also, to a lesser degree, for the heterosexual society as well. It is interesting to note that it can also cause identity problems for the latter e.g. for the woman who is in her involuntarily years and suffering from depression which is partially due to the loss of her physical attractiveness.

2) Many homosexuals have previously (before they came out) internalized standards relating to the "virtue" of heterosexual

marriage and "responsibility". A homosexual marriage is a partial attempt at fulfilling such an internalized standard. IN our age, which still retains many aspects of the Puritan Ethic, the seeming care-free nature and seeming "irresponsibility" of homosexual promiscuity and interactions may arouse deep feelings of guilt in some homosexuals which they unconsciously seek to allay by becoming involved in some type of stable relationship.

Of the 25 in the sample, 9 (36%) had lovers and an additional 9 had one previously but did not at the present time. This figure is slightly higher than the 22% which Loney (60) reports and considerably lower than that reported by Chang and Block (34) who stated that "most" of their sample of 20 men were involved in such relationships. Clearly the sample group is an important variable.

From the lengthy descriptions given by the interviewees and others it is possible to obtain a reasonably clear idea of the nature of such relationships:

Affectional bonds: As a virtual rule, partners perceived a deep and significant affectional bond in every case and saw this as the central motivating factor in their relationship. There were no "marriages of convenience" among the interviewees although the author did encounter such relationships among some of the other people he met. In each case, however, this was clearly distinguished from "marriage" and the relationship was referred to by others as one where one of the partners was "kept" and was not accorded the same status as a "lover"

Although all the lovers claimed that there were deep

affectional bonds the author had some doubts that this was the case for some couples. In one case such doubts were due to purely subjective, but very strong, impressions. In other cases it was due to such subjective impressions plus more objective facts such as: the short length of time that the lovers had known each other before the marriage; the small amount of time spent with each other; the frequency of arguments and disagreements; various inconsiderations displayed by the partners to each other; the continued promiscuity of one or both of the pair without an "arrangement", etc.

If there were marriages where such affectional bonds were at a minimum then perhaps the reasons for maintaining a pretense of such bonds would involve the fact that the homosexuals involved may see such bonds justifying a relationship based mostly on sex and convenience. This pretense is not unlike the pretense that sometimes goes on between two "tricks" trying to pick each other up at a bar. Even though the standard of the homosexual community dictates that such impersonal sex is not countermore behavior, the two people involved in such an interaction will often pretend that there is some emotional feeling. Like the situation involved with the marriage, such pretense may serve to reduce guilt by justifying the interaction on the basis of "good and reasonable emotional feelings" (as opposed to "lust").

Sexuality: All interviewees who had lovers were sexually active with them and all reported this as satisfying. The fact that all reported satisfaction may be due to the fact that the

lovers had ample opportunity before marriage to "test each other out" and also due to the fact that if sexual activity was not satisfactory the lover relationship would usually break up. Despite the high degree of satisfaction, however, four of the married interviewees "tricked out" (i.e. they had sexual involvement outside of the relationship) and an additional one "tricked out" with his lover as a partner (i.e. activity involving three people). Of the 9 interviewees who previously had lovers but did not now, 7 had made a practice of tricking outside the relationship:

In three of the four cases of interviewees who tricked out, the lovers had what is known as "an arrangement". This is extremely common among homosexual couples and implies an overt agreement that the relationship can be carried on without exclusive sexual fidelity. This is a rather striking phenomenon and one rarely found in heterosexual American marriages where infidelity is common but amicable agreements about it are not. The author questioned the interviewees quite closely about this and one respondent's answer is particularly illuminating:

"...You have to understand that you have two horny guys who have had a lot of experience that taught them that it is absolutely possible to have sex without love. In fact, its not only possible, its the rule, or almost that...I love my only lover very much but I still want variety. He doesn't get upset about it because he wants the same thing and he can get it with no problems...He knows that I can go to bed with someone without being emotionally involved and I know that he can too. Then there is also the thing that none of our friends is going to condemn us when they find out. Its acceptable and you don't even have to be discreet about it. Its just sort of understood. A lot of lovers go into the bar and even try to pick up different tricks right in front of each other... Nobody even gives that a second thought. They just say that they have an arrangement...With all that if you find two people together after a while it must mean that they like each other and so in a way its O.K. to go out

and get a little extra since its not going to hurt the relationship..."

Thus, the factors involved that permit the existance of an "arrangement" include the following:

- a) the participants are male with a high level of sexual drive and desire for variety;
- b) there is no community condemnantion and there is even tacit community support;
- c) the participants perceive that other marriage pairs function openly and successfully in this way;
- d) there are frequent situations and easily accessible places, e.g. a bar, to consumate such an arrangement;
- e) the outside involnemenet tends to be sexual rather than personal.

It should be noted that arragnements of this sort are limited to sexual contact only. If an emotional involvement is perceived by one of the lovers this will usually lead to severe problems and possibly to the break-up of the relationship.

Specific sexual activities between lovers were of both oral and anal types and roles generally were alternated if one of the lovers preferred such alternation. Three of the interviewees who were not married, however, reported that they would only be the receiver in anal intercourse for a lover. Apparently, the idea of receiving the partner's penis anally is a concept that may be analagous to the heterosexual "defloration" of a virgin.

Living and economic arrangements: All the interviewees who presently or previously had a lover lived together with them in a house or apartment, except for one who had been too young to move away from his parents at the time. Despite this, the author en-

countered numerous cases among homosexuals that he met socially, where the participants would define themselves as lovers (and be so defined by the rest of the community) and yet did not live together. Apparently, the role of "lover" is one that is largely achieved by mutual self-declaration of the parties involved. There is rarely a questioning of this relationship since the criteria for it are so vague and do not include sexual fidelity or common living arrangements.

Economic arrangements among lovers were usually limited to sharing common expenses e.g. rent, food, etc. Otherwise, economic independence was maintained. Even in the case of those lovers that lived in a private home, the home was owned by one and the other would simply pay a share of the mortgage. Such economic independence seemed partially to be a realistic adaptation to the fact that the marriage arrangement was not permanent and both partners to retain traditional concepts of "masculinity". That such masculine independence be maintained was also a more of the community. Otherwise, the relationship tended to be looked upon as one where one partner was "kept" by the other and this would show to a man who was supported by his wife. It is interesting that the opposite situation i.e. a wife supported by her husband, carries no sanctions at all. By analogy this seems to underscore the value that the homosexual community places on masculine aggressiveness and serves to illustrate the concept that although many of the norms in the homosexual community are

"deviant", many also follow the mores of the larger society.

Reasons for choosing the partner: Every interviewee reported that sexual and emotional considerations were primary factors in their choice. Other important factors seemed to be common interests, common educational level and, in one case, the fact that the partner was relatively non-promiscuous.

There seemed to be a "market-place" orientation to the choosing of a lover with the main emphasis on looks and sexuality. One interviewee put this quite succinctly:

"...Everybody wants a Robert Redford who'll roll over (homosexual slang for permitting anal intercourse) but there aren't enough Robert Redfords who'll roll over to go around...The big thing is youth and looks...Now, someone who is young and a bit of a stud figures that he should get the same thing and so what happens is that the good looking people tend to get each other as lovers because they can have anyone they want and why not pick someone who looks equally good...The ones who are left sort of scramble and try to get someone but they always envy the good looking ones...Its like the same with straights --they're not supposed to marry below their class...only the class has nothing to do with money in this life, its looks..."

One pitfall of depersonalization found in a market-place orientated economy is that while a lover may be a "bargain" (if he is better looking than his mate), one of the participants may decide that he can find a better "sale" elsewhere. This, of course, does not make for especially stable relationships most notably since the "medium of exchange" (physical attractiveness) is so fleeting a characteristic and so subject to the vag-

aries of taste and opinion.

Course and duration of the lover relationship: "Courtship" consisted of the lovers spending an increasing amount of time with each other and was always accompanied by an active sexual relationship. In no case, either of an interviewee or other contact, was the author able to discover an instance where the lovers had not been sexually intimate before they made the decision to become lovers. This is, apparently, unheard of in the gay world.

After a period of from two weeks to several months (average time 6 weeks) the decision would be mutually made to share some common living arrangement. The mutual declaration of the status of "lovers" would usually take place at this point. The author believes that the fact that courtship is so short points to a general desire by homosexuals to remove the partner from the sexual market as quickly as possible lest he be lost to another, more attractive, male. To the homosexual, such a loss would be especially significant, because so much of his self-concept is based on physical attractiveness.

The average duration of a lover relationship is difficult to determine. Among the interviewees who had one or more past lovers the average duration was just under two years but a judgement of duration on the basis of these would be analagous to judging the length of marriages by divorce reports. Among the 9 interviewees who were presently engaged in an ongoing relationship, the average length was 1.2 years but these relationships were still ongoing.

From conversations with homosexuals in the course of the non-interviewing aspects of this project, the author garnered the impression that the average length of a relationship is probably about three years and having several lovers in the course of a homosexual career is the rule rather than the exception. The interviewees, taken as a whole, averaged two lovers each and their average age was only 26.9.

Factors creating difficulty and reasons for break-up: The most frequent factor that creates difficulty and may lead to the break-up of the relationship is the emotional involvement of one of the partners with a third person. This should be distinguished from sexual promiscuity which is often present without a problem. The interviewees who had previous broken marriages, however, felt that once sexual intimacy with another person was established, emotional intimacy would soon follow. The interviewees who did not have past broken marriages felt that sexual intimacy with a third person would not necessarily hamper their relationship with their lover. It was the author's impression, however, that this was a rationalization designed to justify indulgence in the sex which is so available in the gay world. It is interesting to note at this point that the mores of the gay culture as a whole support "extra marital" sex when there is "an arrangement" and yet such support is highly destructive to many homosexual marriages.

The second most frequent reason for break-up was "boredom"..

Since other diversion, whether sexual or cosial, was usually freely available (especially to economically independent males in a very free subculture) the net result was that a boring home situation would result in one or both of the partners being away from the home for increasingly long periods of time. Sexual boredom was also a factor for the same reasons. It is interesting that this was never described as "incompatibility" but seemed to be a matter of diminished interest rather than a specific sexual conflict or impotence.

The third most frequent reasons for lovers separating was the situation that arose when one or both of the lovers had to move to a different locality in order to pursue a career.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of an examination of the reasons that homosexual marriages do not last is a reason which almost all of the interviewees were aware: The fact that the broader society does not support or recognize such marriages. Thus it is usually necessary to hide the fact from parents, relatives and neighbors. It is interesting that among women, where homosexuality is not as socially condemned and where two women can often live together without arousing undue suspicion, researchers have found higher "marriage rates"- Loney(60) reports a rate of 82%- then the rate of 36% in the present male sample. Such a difference may, of course, represent other variables e.g. sex differences, subcultural differences, the fact that women, just in terms of upbringing, may see a greater value in marriage, etc. The influence of societal non-support, non-recognition and condemna--

tion should not be minimized however. Additionally, for homosexual community. The only place where the legitimacy of such an arrangement is recognized is within the homosexual community and in fact, this one of the most crucial ways that the subculture functions for its members. It was only in such a subculture that the homosexual lovers felt they could be open about their relationship. The net result of this was that they were drawn further into that subculture. In fact, 8 of the 9 interviewees with lovers reported that their friends and associates were almost exclusively homosexual, 6 of the nine with past marriages reported this but only 3 of the remaining 7 said this was so.

The author would guess that another reason for the instability of homosexual marriages is a lack of early socialization regarding role expectations for such arrangements. Dank (58) points out:

"...the parents of a Negro can communicate to their child what it is like to be a Negro, but the parents of a child who is to become homosexual do not prepare their child to be homosexual--they are not homosexuals themselves and do not communicate to him what it is like to be a homosexual..."

It is therefore not surprising that when an individual is thrust into a role that is condemned by the society and for which, furthermore, he has had inadequate preparation, that such a role will tend to be unstable. Still, despite the obvious temporary nature of such marriages and the frequent emotional turmoil associated with them, almost all homosexuals continue to insist that this is the type of relationship they are seeking.

On Societal PressureQuote:

- E: "Can you tell me if you think society disapproves of homosexuals and also, if you do, how it affects you?"
- S: "I don't think, I know. I've known all my life. It's affected me from the time I was twelve. I used to feel like an animal because I was convinced that what I was feeling, what I was thinking, was the most horrible thing imaginable. ...I was an asexual huml an being for most of my life and its only now that I'm beginning to become free and I'm still not there yet..."
- E: "What do you mean?"
- S: "That I'm still hiding. Oh, I don't hide from myself anymore and I don't hide from other homosexuals, but I do have to hide from the rest of the world..."
- E: "Can you explain to me a bit more?"
- S: "Well, I have a lover. In some ways its like being married. But can you imagine being married and never being able to touch in public, never being able to say that you love each other? Can you imagine having to hide your sleeping together and certainly your sex together...If you talked about something like that for married people you would be locked up...They'd say you're nuts but its not nuts, that's the situation here..."
- E: "Go on please."
- S: "Well, if you're gay you have to hide it. That's all there is to it. You have to hide it from people on the streets and you have to hide it from your boss, God forbid...Then there are a few others, like parents andlandladies, and neighbors and friends...This really makes me angry. I think I know how it would feel to be black but maybe we're at least a little lucky...if you're black you can't hide it...I guess the worst part isn't even hiding it, It's that you have to hide it and then drag it out again. Its almost like being a split personality..."
- E: "How so?"
- S: "Well, you just have to be two people. Then its like you have to put the two people in little boxes and each box has this long list taped on the inside about what they can do and what they can't, and then you have to memorize the lists but if you make even one little mistake, its Zappo!! Like, I'll give you an example: looking at some guy's crotch is bad in the daytime but good at night but paying attention to a pretty firl is good in the daytime but bad at night. Then, staring into someone's eyes is bad in the daytime but good at night and on and on and on. Sometimes I even confuse myself..."
- E: "How else does society's disapproval affect you?"
- S: "Well, it makes it much harder for me to have straight friends because I have a lover and I more or less have to limit my friends, well, at least my close friends to gay people..."

E: "Is there any other way?"

S: "Maybe the whole idea of a ghetto?"

E: "A ghette?"

S: "All kinds of ghettos. Like, gay people live in one place like the Village but they stay to themselves not just where they live but when they go out too...its a psychological ghetto...its a prison..."

When dealing with the issue of how societal pressure affects the lives of a given social group it is necessary to consider first how such a group perceives such pressure since it is their perception that will form the basis for their action. The subjects of this study seemed to perceive three different kinds of pressures: Internal pressure; Social pressure; and Legal pressure.

Internal Pressure: Only 3 of the 25 interviewees reported predominantly feeling guilty about their homosexual orientation, although 15 reported that they would feel some degree of shame if their activities were observed by someone who was not sympathetic. This relative lack of guilt is understandable in terms of the fact that some degree of selection has already taken place in the interview population and also in terms of the fact that once the interviewees had been in the homosexual subculture for a while their guilt feelings were much reduced. This is indicated by the fact that 20 of the interviewees felt guilty at earlier points in their lives before they "came out". Obviously one of the crucial functions of the community is to mitigate such internalized feelings about homosexuality. Interviewees reported that such feelings produced the following:

a) Personal anguish: There were three depressive episodes

reported and two were severe enough to interfere with the interviewee's personal and social functioning.

b) Withdrawal from further sexual contact for a prolonged period
Two of the interviewees reported guilt feelings severe enough to cause them to give up sexual activities for a period greater than six months. Such withdrawal was most pronounced just before they "came out".

c) Help seeking activity: Three sought help from a priest, two from their family physicians and seven from a psychiatrist. The five who saw the priests and family physicians felt that such contact was not very beneficial due to varying degrees of prejudicial attitudes on the part of the helpers. The seven (28%) who obtained psychiatric care were divided into two groups. The first group (N-4) felt that the treatment had helped them make a reasonable adjustment to their sexual orientation and were now guilt-free, while the second group (N-3) still felt some degree of present guilt and were continuing in treatment.

Social Pressures: These derived from several different sources:

a) Parents: Numerous incidents of pressure by parents was described. In the case of parents who had no definitive knowledge that their son was homosexual (N-18), such incidents revolved around the expression of the parents' desire for the son to date heterosexually and derision of his passive status. In the case of parents who did know that their son was homosexual

(N-7) three were reported as being friendly and accepting (one set even inviting the son and his over to sleep together in thier home) while four were reported to be moderately to severely hostile.

The interviewees themselves tended to handle parental criticism by withdrawal. Of the nineteen who did not live with their parents, twelve felt that they wanted as little contact with them as possible:

"...Every time I see them its "Who'd you go out with, boys or girls. It's not their asking that bothers me. Its the sneer. Its like I feel they're just disgusted and revolted because they suspect, I think, and they're looking for an proper opportunity to dig. Its just the way they handle it. How can I feel comfortable with them when I know that that revolts them...Let me tell you, being queer is a bitch with parents..."

All in all the interaction of the interviewee's homosexuality and parental attitudes was quite destructive to their relationship. Several interviewees theorized that perhaps their parents felt responsible for their homosexual orientation and compensated bor their guilt by being actively hostile. Another described similar feelings of guilt on the part of his parents but said that thsi resulted in an uneasy truce because the parents made an active effort to ignore any actions that might be related to homosexuality e.g. overnight dissapearances.

b) Friends: Almost all the interviewees (23) had, at sometime, felt that they were under intense peer pressure to maintain

heterosexual relationships. As the subjects began to become increasingly sure that they were homosexuals they began to feel that they could not meet their friend's demands for confirmation of heterosexual status. Such demands were rarely overt as such, but took the more subtle form of expectations about being seen with women and expectations about engaging in frank sexual discussions with males and attending social activities with a mixed crowd of males and females.

The net result was that many of the interviewees began a process of gradual withdrawal from heterosexual friendship contacts and, to a lesser extent, social contacts and activities. This process was speeded up by the process of "coming out" and 17 of the interviewees reported that their friends and associates were almost completely homosexual after that. Some of the interviewees, however, decided to "come out totally" and aggressively told most of their friends and relatives of their sexual preferences. This was usually accomplished with the psychological and social support of a gay liberation organization.

The interviewees described the results as largely favorable with a majority of the people to whom they made the revelations reacting with immediate dismay and surprise but eventual acceptance.

c) Employers: In all but two cases the employer of the interviewee had no knowledge of his sexual orientation. The two cases were both situations where the employer was homosexual and this fact was known to the interviewee.

Despite the fact that no interviewee had ever lost a job because of homosexuality there was widespread fear of this. The interviewees generally felt that they could not participate in social situations at work because their sexual orientation might be exposed when they failed to meet certain social expectations involving contact with women. As a group they tended to limit their contacts with fellow employees to the job situation only and to avoid any situation which might prove awkward. Generally this meant refusing to participate in social contact with co workers outside of the job environment.

d) General societal disapproval: The effect of the homosexual's perception of hostile social attitudes not only isolates him and tends to force him to remain exclusively within the homosexual community but also affects his activities within that community. For example, there was a widespread feeling that it was extremely difficult to live openly as a homosexual with a lover, that affection between two males could not be openly admitted or expressed in public and that it was uncomfortable to make use of certain business establishments (e.g. restaurants) unless basic feelings and actions were disguised. Other effects of their perception of social intolerance involved delay in coming out, limitation of the social life of the gay community to those places that are relatively unobservable, fear of the authorities, etc. Some of the gay liberationists also felt that closed public attitudes prevented the establishment of homosexual meeting places where there would be

less emphasis on sex and more on other aspects of human relationships.

It was generally felt that societal attitudes force a split into what was frequently described as "two personalities"- a public straight life and a secret homosexual one. Such fragmentation was felt to be one of the most difficult parts of being homosexual:

"...Being gay is more than just screwing a guy, its a whole way of living, everything. People don't realize this. You think differently and you get the idea of being on the outside, looking in. Most people can't tell I'm gay by looking and in a way its a blessing and in a way its not. Its a blessing because it lets me avoid being recognized when I don't want to but I think its also, well,...a curse because I don't ever really stand up and admit to the world that I'm gay and yet I can't get away from being gay so I have to lead two lives. One is during the day and one is at night. It drives me up the wall..."

Legal Pressures: Although it is not technically illegal to be a homosexual, many of the acts that homosexuals engage in would fall under the purview of the sodomy laws (Exceptions are Connecticut and Illinois where acts between consenting adults in private are now legal). Despite this, the probability of prosecution is quite low. What the interviewees report to be a good deal more common is the incidence of harassment and questioning by the police. Seven of the interviewees have been so questioned in this manner, six while engaging in street cruising and one while hustling. IN no case were they physically abused or seriously threatened by the police. Thus, despite the fact that there are so few (in

terms of the total number of homosexual acts) definitive prosecutions, there remains a widespread fear that discretion will not be employed by the police and serious consequences will follow.

The reasons for such fear seem to be based on several factors: the fact that most homosexuals sense the police as being very contemptuous of them; the fact that when a case of prosecution does occur the word spreads quickly through the grape vine; The fact that homosexuals see the attitude of the authorities as reflecting the general societal attitude of which many of them have had personal experience with; and the fact that there is a certain carryover from a number of years ago when prosecutions against homosexuals and homosexual establishments were much more frequent..

Blackmail is often mentioned as another danger of being homosexual but none of the interview sample had ever been blackmailed nor had any attempt at all had been made to do so. This was not the case with other homosexuals the author has come in contact with, especially those older homosexuals who are in more sensitive positions.

In summary, the pressures that a homosexual faces are of three kinds: internal, social and legal. Internal pressures (mainly guilt) produced the following reactions: personal anguish, withdrawal from sexual contacts for a prolonged period and help seeking activity (consulting a priest, physician or psychiatrist). Social pressures came mainly from parents (and were handled chiefly by withdrawal), friends (handled by moving almost exclusively to gay associates),

employers (handled by limited social contacts with fellow employees in off-the-job situations) and the general society (handled by "passing" in straight society). Legal pressures were feared but, in general, were not a reality, although they were several years back before the start of the gay liberation movement.

Dintz, Dynes and Clarke (50) point out that in traditional fold societies deviant behavior is seen as only one part of total behavior while in complex industrial societies deviant behavior is characteristic of the total person. This fact, when combined with the fact that in America social status is largely a matter of achievement rather than ascription, places the homosexual in a very unenviable position: He is conferred the role of deviant person, of deviant total being, and no amount of work, no amount of achievement, no amount of effort, can remove this on us. His position is very different from that of, say, a member of a minority group who, by educational, economic and social means can rise from a low status position to one of acceptance. The homosexual cannot do this and he is usually very much aware of the fact. Dintz, Dynes and Clarke also point to five views of deviants: the deviant as "freak", the deviant as sinful, the deviant as criminal, the deviant as sick, and the deviant as alienated. The homosexual is seen by the society as all of these: psychiatrists claim he is sick (although recent developments indicate homosexuality is being "declassified" as a form of mental illness); priests say he is sinful; the law says his acts are criminal; the lay public sees him as a freak; and he

sees himself as lonely and alienated. Thus, to avoid the burden of this type of reaction he may do one of two things. One, he may place himself in a position of insulation and protection within the homosexual community and conduct his life almost exclusively in the presence of other homosexuals or, two, he may attempt to "pass". Goffman (51) discusses the general issue of the use of techniques of information control to assist in passing. Many of the techniques he describes have been used by the subjects of this study:

- 1) The stigmatized person may "conceal or obliterate signs that have come to be stigma symbols". Thus the homosexual would not "swish" or "camp" in public, nor would he wear jewelry, nor would he dress in clothing even vaguely suggestive of femininity. In short, he would try to be as aggressively masculine as possible.
- 2) The stigmatized person may make use of "disidentifiers" i.e. objects or actions that contraindicate his stigma. Thus, homosexuals in public often claim that they participate in sports, that they are active with heterosexual women, and that they enjoy other traditionally masculine activities.
- 3) The stigmatized person may use a "cover". An example of this would be a marriage of "convenience" by a male and female homosexual who both wished to continue their sexual activities and yet have the protective social cloak of marriage. Although this was not the case for any of the interviewees, it is not unheard of in the homosexual community.
- 4) The stigmatized person may handle his stigma by "dividing the

world into a large group to whom he tells nothing and a small group to whom he tells all and upon which he relies: He then co-opts for his masquerade those individuals who would ordinarily constitute the greatest danger". Thus, the homosexual will frequently tell a number of his close associates and may actually use these associates, especially if they are female, to help conceal his homosexuality from the rest of the world.

The author believes that the issue of "passing" is crucial to the homosexual, not only in terms of reducing unfavorable interaction with the larger society but also in terms of reducing unfavorable interaction of previously learned internal role incorporations with present behavior. That is to say, the homosexual, merely by living in modern American society, has probably incorporated a number of subtle value systems and role models relating to how a "good" male should act, and what qualities he should possess and desire. Indeed, Talcott Parsons(52) has pointed out that "the inescapable conclusion is that not only moral standards but all the components of the common culture are internalized as part of the personality structure". For example the "ideal" male in America today is athletic, masculine, good-looking, witty, with a good job and a large penis. At the same time, the nature of stigmatization is such that homosexuals will be seen as deviant totalities and having few desirable qualities. To the extent that the individual homosexual 1) incorporates the societal

view of the "totality" of his deviance, his present homosexual behavior will come into conflict with his values and beliefs and previously incorporated role models. One way to partially reduce this conflict is to "pass". The homosexual can then make the psychological statement to himself: "I am a good, desirable person; I can demonstrate these desirable qualities most of the time; Only my sexuality, and not me in my everyday existence, is different".

"Passing" is thus practical for the homosexual in both a practical and in an internal (conflict-reducing) sense. It is, of course, also functional for the larger heterosexual society, which then does not have to be confronted with the "specter" of homosexuality. It is interesting, in this regard, that there is another form of "passing" which is seen in an occasional "mixed" bar i.e. a bar in which both heterosexuals and homosexuals congregate. In this type of situation both groups are aware of the existence and activities of the other, yet they intermix, usually without any reference to their differences. By mutual and tacit consent both groups thus avoid a confrontation by not referring (at least "publically") to the "otherness" or "outside" status of the opposite group. Such cases, however, are by far the exception and the homosexual, in his day-to-day life, must still deal with very substantial problems of pressure, discovery and stigmatization.

On Becoming A HomosexualQuote:

...When did I become a homosexual? Its kind of difficult to say, I think. How do you say exactly when? I always suspected I was gay and when I was a kid I had all these fantasies about boys, but I didn't have my first experience until I was fifteen. I don't think it was until then that I knew for certain...If you have straight friends at that age all they're concerned about is how many females they've screwed and what can you tell them?: 'I screwed a cute guy last wee,?....If you go out youre expected to have a date and if some of them are married they try to set you up. I was really getting uncomfortable, hot under the collar, because I felt so trapped... I couldn't do one thing and I couldn't tell them the other, or at least I didn't think I could. So what finally happened was that gradually I began to drop a lot of my friends...not deliberately in the sense of telling them to get lost but more in just who I wanted to see...so now I have practically no straight friends and I pal around with the people I know from the bars. I guess that I'm hooked..."

The answer to the question "How does a person become homosexual?" depends on ;what one means by the word "homosexual". Is one referring to a specific sexual orientation, to the sexual acts associated with that orientation, or to the career role of the homosexual? While most studies have dealt with the first two, little has been written about the third. This project is concerned with career roles and it is quite obvious that such roles carry many implications beyond that of sexuality alone. It involve a whole set of behaviors common to a social group and is more a matter of homosociality then homosexuality. Therefore it is necessary to look at the routes through which a homosexual gains entry to such groups, the nature of these groups and the functions that such groups perform for their members. We must also, as Becker (48) points out, evolve a "model which takes into account the fact that patterns of behavior develop in an orderly sequence".

As a result of the data gathered in the interview as well as numerous discussions with various groups of homosexuals, the author was able to piece together a common pattern, a sequence of events where--body the homosexual comes to assume his career role. It is, of course, important to realize that the author's contacts were limited, with few exceptions to those that were already in confirmed career roles, and that there is probably a large group of men who, although they practice homosexual behavior in the sexual sense, are not career homosexuals. For the purposes of this study, let us define a career homosexual as one who has significant contact with other homosexuals in social settings (e.g. bars, baths, friendship cliques, etc.)

and who has accepted the role of "homosexual".

There are five steps that seem to be significant in terms of leading to a career role: 1) the point at which the subject first had fantasies about homosexual acts or romantic attachments to males; 2) his first sexual experience with a male; 3) his realization that he is homosexually oriented; 4) his first contact with the other homosexuals in a social setting and ; 5) his entrance into homosexual society.

These steps almost always occur in this sequence, except that the point at which the subject realizes he is homosexually oriented may be before or after his first experience.

First fantasies or romantic attachments to males: The average age at which the interview subjects reported they had their first fantasy was 11.2 with a range from 8 to 15. Their memory of these is quite vague but approximately half seemed to involve activities of a sexual nature (not necessarily overtly sexual, but often involving wrestling, close body contact, etc.) while the other half seemed to be oriented towards a kind of romantic attachment (being "best friends", "doing everything together", falling in love, etc.). As the subjects got older the nature of the fantasies seemed to become more specifically sexual in nature. Nine of the interview subjects, for example, reported developing an intense "crush" on a male friend. As a rule, when the fantasizer was fairly young (about twelve seemed to be the dividing line) there was no guilt or recrimination associated with such daydreaming but, as the subjects got older, 12 of them reported such feelings.

First sexual experience with a male: While 4 of the subjects reported that they had engaged in mutual masturbatory play prior to the onset of adolescence, they did not feel that this was related to their homosexuality. The average age that subjects had their first sexual experience with another male was 14 with a range of from 10 to 26. In 10 cases this was initiated by the subject, in 6 by the partner, in 7 by the partner with the active cooperation of the subject, and in 2 there was apparent mutuality. The age range of the partners varied and there did not seem to be any pattern that was particularly common except that when the act was initiated by the partner, the partner tended to be older. When the act was initiated by the subject the partner tended to be the same age. Exact figures are impossible to obtain since the memory of most of the interviewees as to the partner's age are rather vague.

Approximately half (12) of the interviewees stated that they realized they were homosexual before and at the time of their first experience and 60% report considerable guilt as a result of this experience. Realization, however, was not related to whether the subject felt guilty or not.

Most of the interviewees did not have enough subsequent contact with the partner to know if he was homosexual or not but seven were able to say definitely that he was.

Let us look at some examples as seen by the subjects themselves:

"...I was about eleven and I used to go to this swimming hole that I knew because I knew there were men who went there and they took their clothes off... I used to get a big thrill out of that, just to see their chests and the penises with the hair, by God, they were beautiful...anyway, one day I was there and I saw these two guys going at it. They were doing sixty-nine, I think, and I became terrifically excited and I began to jerk off. They kept going and I became excited all over again. When I saw them finish I went down and asked one of them if I could feel his penis. They must have thought it was kind of funny because here was this kid who was only eleven. The guy said yes and I just put it in my mouth. He couldn't get a hard-on because he had just come but he laid me down on the ground and undressed me and then he went down on me...It was really beautiful and he asked me if I had ever done this before and I said "no" but that I wanted to and he told me where to go so I could do it all the time..."

"...All through High School I knew I was gay and I was just aching to have someone hold me. Finally I was walking down on Bleefer Street with some friends when one of them pointed out this bar and said it was a queer bar...I was seventeen and I figured maybe I could pass for eighteen and I did and they let me in past the open door but in two minutes I saw that it was just an ordinary bar. I was really disgusted because I had worked myself up for the thing and then it turned out to be a disappointment. I was wandering back and I kind of decided to maybe look for another one when this guy came up to me and asked if I knew what time it was. I think now that he was looking and sort of figured out what was up. Anyway, we started to talk and he invited me up to his apartment for coffee. He sat right next to me on the couch and he finally put his hand on my leg. Oh, it was just what I was waiting for and we went from there..."

"...I was about fifteen and there was this next door neighbor that I liked. He was eating lunch at my house and later we were going to go out but I said I wanted to take a nap and it might be a good idea

for him to take one too. He said he would sleep in the basement couch but I told him he didn't have to be uncomfortable and he could sleep with me in my bed. I think he must have been gay because he said he always slept in the nude, that it was much better and he asked why didn't we take our clothes off? Naturally I agreed but I think by that time we both knew what was going on...We blew each other and he tried to fuck me but it was too painful and we had to stop..."

Eighty percent of the interviewees did not see the partner with whom they had their first experience again while twenty percent did. All went on to have a number of subsequent experiences and became increasingly active in seeking such experience.

Realization of homosexual orientation: Half the interviewees (12) reported that they realized they were homosexual before their first experience while the other half reported that they did not come to this conclusion until after a number of subsequent experiences. Seven of the interviewees reported intense anxiety and depression associated with this realization.

The average age at which realization of homosexual orientation took place was 15.0 with a range of 10 to 26. It should be noted, however, that many of the subjects described this as a gradual process and were unable to give an exact age with certainty.

Heterosexual activity seemed related to this realization in the sense that all the subjects felt that they did not desire it. Still, 17 of the 25 made attempts at heterosexuality (14 achieved intercourse) because they felt that perhaps their homosexual desires could be overcome in this way. The average age for achieve-

ment of intercourse was 17.

The factors that subjects felt led them to conclude that they were homosexual included: having a homosexual contact, enjoying the sexual experience, seeking out other such experiences, presence of wishes and desire, lack of heterosexual desire, lack of heterosexual activity and failure at heterosexual activity.

First contact with homosexuals in a social setting: For 20 out of 25 interviewees their first contact with other homosexuals in a social setting took place in a bar. Out of the remaining 5, 1 took place at a private party, 1 in a house of prostitution, 1 in the "baths" and 2 at a meeting of a gay liberation organization. The average age of such contact was 19.0 with a range of 16 to 27.

There were three routes by which the subjects came to this type of contact. The first was by knowing and receiving information about the existence of such institutions from one of their sexual contacts. This was the most common (N-15). The second route was by discovering the existence of a bar accidentally. This was true for three of the sample who "walked into the wrong kind of bar". The third route was being brought to a bar by friends (N-2), the fourth route involved being employed in a homosexual capacity or in a place associated with a homosexual clientele (N-2). Finally the fifth route was the deliberate seeking out of a publicized homosexual gathering place such as the office of a gay liberation organization or the baths (N-3).

Entrance into homosexual society: Gaining entrance to homosexual society is actually a very simple matter due to the fact that there almost no "admission" criteria other than sexual orientation and the ability to locate some visible portion of that society (e.g. a bar or public gathering). Interviewees gave the average age of this development at 19.5 with a range of 16 to 28. They report that almost immediately after they made their initial contact and were able to locate an entry point, they began to increasingly frequent such places. The reasons they gave were several:

- a) Homosexual settings provided a place where they could obtain sexual contacts. Since the obtaining of such contacts is the norm and especially easy for newcomers (see chapter on the bars), it was much easier to obtain sexual partners in this way than to do it on a catch-as catch-can basis.
- b) there was relative freedom from discovery since most of the participants were confirmed homosexuals.
- c) there was relative freedom from prosecution by the authorities since, in order to stay in business, such establishments must provide that sort of protection.

Other factors related to the assumption of a homosexual career role:

While entry to the gay community is a very simple matter, the assumption of a predominantly homosexual social orientation is something else. It is relatively easy to explain just the specific sexual and practical reasons that lead to a young homosexual frequenting bars but an explanation of why he adopts gay friends and engages in other non-sexual homosexual activities is more elusive. Most of the interviewees felt that the predominating factors that led to their active social involvement were related to psychological and

social pressures:

- a) They almost all (24 out of 25) felt more comfortable when surrounded by others who they view as "of their own kind":

"...When you begin to go to the bars you have a tremendous sense of relief because you can let your hair down and people are going to be sympathetic. If you feel like staring at some guy's basket you can do that. If you feel like kissing a friend or rubbing his ass you can do all that. Everyone is like you and there's no problem. You're all gay..."

- b) Most felt (22 out of 25) that they had a great deal more in common with other homosexuals:

"...You talk about the same things, you read the same gay novels, you gossip about the same people and most important, you more or less know how they're thinking...You don't feel at a total loss. There's a common ground and you don't feel like you're talking about X while they're talking about Y..."

- c) Most felt (21 out of 25) that homosexual institutions also served as a source of platonic friends:

"...I don't go to bed with everyone I meet, you ;know. There are a lot of people I just like to know without any kind of love. I'm at the bar so often that I can't help meeting them and its good because if I was on ;the outside I would have to hide an important part of my life from them..."

- d) Many felt (15 out of 25) uncomfortable in some "straight" situations:

"...I can't talk about fucking girls all day long. Fuck this, fuck that, that's all you ever hear from half of them. They want to know who I'm dating and when I'm getting married.

When I'm without a girl or just with my male friends, people get suspicious. So one way to avoid that is to avoid them...Now, instead of going to Your Father's Mustache (a "straight" bar in Greenwich Village) I come here (subject is referring to Gay Activists Alliance, a homosexual liberation organization in New York City). I don't have to answer any questions that way..."

- e) Many felt (18 out of 25) felt less guilty about their sexual behavior as a result of seeing so many others in a similar situation and felt that their activities were more acceptable in their own eyes:

"...I used to feel like I was dirty every time I had sex with a guy. Finally I started to go to the baths and no one there looked too guilty. Matter of fact, they looked like they were having a very good time. Then I started to go to the bars and I had a chance to talk to people...A lot of them looked pretty happy to me and they didn't look sick at all...I think it was then that I began to feel better about myself...not as filthy and dirty..."

- f) Many felt (15 out of 25) that homosexual institutions give them a sense of belonging and of security against an "outside" group:

"...When you're gay you can get to feeling that the whole world is against you and who wants to be alone and fighting the whole world? I feel much better being part of a group... a kind of all-for-one and one-for-all type of thing...actually, its even more than that... Its also the idea of having a group of friends. We're in groups, like anybody else. Like straights can go bowling one night, you know, a night with the boys. We like to do the same thing. I think everybody needs people that they like and who like them and who they feel comfortable with to be around..."

- g) Many (16 out of 25) enjoyed the social nature of gay institutions:

"...A lot of people think its just sex. It's

not. When I go into a bar there are a lot of things that attract me. I love to drink and have a good time like anybody else, especially when all my friends are there... There's dancing and singing and foot-stomping and carrying-on. So you're (the author) asking me why I go. Maybe a better question is "why not?"...its fun in a lot of ways..."

h) Many felt (18 out of 25) that the gay community was the only place where their emotional needs could be satisfied:

"...I could have kept cruising the streets forever but where's the kick in that? Its one trick after another, after another, after another...I want to find someone I can love and who can love me back and I'm not going to find someone I can love and who can love me back and I'm not going to find that in any other place but with gay people who are fairly un-uptight. The ones on the streets are ready to climb a wall, ther're so uptight...Who can love someone who thinks of them as filthy and disgusting?...The ones who go to the bar are different and the ones I meet socially are different and the ones I meet socially are different. They've accepted it, they're comfortable with it...They can take a chance and give you some of their feelings..."

It is notable that there is an everage lapse of 5.2 years between having an initial homosexual experience and entrance into homosexual society and a 4.2 year lapse between realization of homosexual orientation and such entrance. Factors responsible for the length of this lapse include fear, unresolved guilt, lack of visibility of homosexual institutions and legal drinking age minimums. There seems to be a noticeable

trend for the length of this lapse to decline as the age of the subject gets lower i.e. older homosexuals report an average lapse that is longer than younger homosexuals do. This trend is not visible in the interview sample because of restricted range but many homosexuals that the author has spoken to confirm the validity of this notion. The reason seems to be the increasing openness and visibility of homosexuality, largely as a result of political activism and increasing liberality on the part of the larger society in general.

Homosexuality and the "self": In any discussion of homosexuality it is also necessary to consider the question "How are concepts of identity and the self affected by becoming and being a homosexual?" Let us discuss this in some detail: George H. Mead implied that many aspects of the self are a function of the individual's social interaction and environment. The self, in other words, is much more of a social than an individual construct. This view provides a valuable perspective for viewing the changes in self that occur as a result of homosexual orientation. Such changes are a process and seem to occur in three basic contexts: In the establishment of self when the homosexual "comes out"; in the maintenance of self when he is an active homosexual in contact with homosexual society; and in the failure of self that may occur as he ages and begins to lose his sexual attractiveness.

The establishment of self: As adolescents and young adults most

homosexuals have a deficient self-concept and lack many of the usual anchors that give a sense of self. The heterosexual can define himself by his reactions and success with the opposite sex, by his orientation toward marriage and children and by his heterosexual social activities. He also receives confirmation of his self-definition by subtle and not-so-subtle societal and personal approval which society does not give the homosexual. He is often confused and experiences his sexual desires as ego alien. Since sexuality, at this time in life, is viewed as such a central part of identity, the homosexual often experiences an alienation of self. His identity is unacceptable, confused, rootless and very vague. Just as most adolescents are partially "in search of self", so is the homosexual, only his search is that much more desperate because he is much more lacking of a base to go with. The author believes that the "coming out" process has the prime psychological function of providing a confirmation of self, an identity, a consistent set of values, feelings and group identifications that the homosexual can use to establish the validity of his won being. In this sense, "coming out" has a dual meaning. It refers to coming out to society (or at least homosexual society) and also to coming out to oneself. The following is quite typical:

"...I was really confused. I don't think I really know who I was. I mean, I had a body, I knew my name and I knew what I did for a living but, I don't know, I just wasn't sure of who I was...Everybody that I knew had all these plans. They were going to get married, they were going to have a nice house in Glen Cove, they were going to have so many kids, and do this and that and so on. They knew just where they were headed. I felt like I didn't have any purpose...It's hard to des-

cribe. It was like I existed and I was alive but I didn't see the point in it and I didn't know just what I was supposed to do. I tried to go straight for awhile but it didn't wor. I felt like I was ttryng to step into somebody else's body...Finally, like I was telling you before, I came out and I felt much more comfortable. I knew that I could do this and that and the other thing and I began to the idea that someday I could get a lover and I felt like my life had some meaning, something besides eating and slooping and eating and sleeping... I'm not sure I like who I am now, I'm so different then what I was before, but at least I know who I am..."

The homosexual community provides many self-anchors. The homosexual can identify with other homosexuals and thereby gain some sense of group identity. He does this not only by identifying with the gay community but also by psychologically "removing" himself from the straight community. The self is differentiated by establishing a firm, positive "we" (homosexuals) and a firm negative "they" (heterosexuals). The self is also anchored by learging a new and specific set of behavior codes. The homosexual can now view himself as a person who is defined by certain concrete expectations and proscritptions, who knows what to do in a given situation, what can be done, and who has a clear idea of the various possibilities for manipulating and interacting with the environment. The self is furhther defined by taking on a new set of values. The homosexual can say: "I am a god(bad) person because I am (am not) good-looking" or "I am successful (not successful) because I can (can not) pick up tricks and that is the criterion of success".

Once such a new self is established it must be defended and maintained.

The maintainance of self: When a homosexual accepts his homosexual role and joins the gay community, his identity is still under attack from many fronts: parents, society, and the law and the homosexual's own residual guilt and shame. Sykes and Matza (49), in an article originally devoted to a theory of delinquency, but having wider implications, suggest that when behavior is seen as deviant a process called "neutralization" may occur, whereby the behavior in question is rendered justified and non-deviant. The present author would speculate that many aspects of homosexual behavior and rationale have such "neutralization" as an important psychological function. Such behaviors include:

a) Isolation from straight society: Just as a neurotic may isolate aspects of his pathology from the rest of his personality, the homosexual may psychologically isolate his sexuality, and homosexual social functioning from his interaction with straight society. The result is similar in that it enables the individual involved to avoid labeling his entire identity as "deviant" by not integrating the "deviancy" with the rest of his personality and behavior.

b) Homosexual analogues: Establishing analogues to heterosexual behavior e.g. having a "lover" relationship is a prime example. Having a lover serves many functions--prevention of loneliness, sexual satisfaction, companionship, an outlet for emotional feelings and needs, etc. It also, however, serves to justify homosexual behavior by placing it within as

acceptable framework. By labeling such a relationship a "marriage" the homosexual can say to himself: "This is the correct thing to do. My behavior is not deviant because it is similar to what heterosexuals do. Only the sex of my partner is different." Another mechanism for accomplishing this type of neutralization is the exact opposite, or,

c) Active rejection of heterosexual values: The homosexual can psychologically justify his behavior by rationalizing that it is not deviant since the heterosexual value system that defines it as such is not valid. Many gay liberation organizations frequently point out the foibles and pitfalls involved in heterosexual marriage and other relationships and use this rationale for saying that homosexual behavior is at least as justified, if not more so.

d) Avoidance: As opposed to mental isolation the homosexual may seek to neutralize his deviancy by physically avoiding those who view it as such. Thus parents are often avoided, heterosexual friends always may be dropped to a minimum, and employment may be sought in predominantly homosexual fields e.g. hairdressing and dancing.

e) Denial of responsibility: Every homosexual interviewee maintained that homosexuality should not be considered a social problem because there really was no victim. This rationale (which the author agrees with) allows the homosexual to neutralize his "crime" by denying that it exists as such.

f) Pretense: Even though most homosexuals subscribe to the value that it is acceptable to have sex without emotional involvement, many pretend such involvement as a regular pre-

lude to picking up a sexual contact. Since the two people involved have probably only recently met, the pretense is obvious for what it is, yet it is still engaged in. The author believes that the reason for such pretense is that it enables the homosexual to state to himself: "I am not just engaging in lustful and deviant sex but rather I am expressing good and reasonable emotional feeling, the kind that heterosexuals feel all the time."

h) Detachment: To the degree that behavior can be detached from criticism of that behavior, its deviancy can be minimized. Such detachment is frequently seen in the self-deprecatory homosexual sense of humor. For example, when one interviewee was asked why he had had six sexual contacts within one week period, he replied: "Well, I'M a faggot you know."

The failure of self: Occasionally, despite all attempts to maintain ego integrity, there is difficulty or failure to do so. Self-acceptability for the homosexual is unfortunately tied intimately to age and physical appearance. Since so much of homosexuality occurs in a group setting, the reinforcement of the peer group is crucial in the maintenance of self. However, at about the age of thirty-five or so the average homosexual finds himself in a situation where he is increasingly rejected by his peer group and made the subject of derision. How is the self maintained and how is failure of

self prevented under these circumstances? The author does not have sufficient data on this issue since most older homosexuals largely disappear from the bar scene. However, from the data gathered it can be speculated that the following defenses probably play a part:

a) Assuming the role of the clown: Many older homosexuals who come into the bar frequently assume the role of "class clown". If others are going to make fun of them they will do it first. Some make a virtul fetish of acting in a largely inappropriate way and of boisterously calling attention to themselves. This was one of the saddest aspects of homosexual life that the author aboserved. By actively embracing the role that their peers see them in (even though it is a highly negative role) older homosexuals forestall criticism regarding their new unacceptability in regard to their previous role (the sexually attractive male).

b) assuming the role of the "father": Many older homosexuals, being forced to adopt a self-redefinition, adopt the role of mentor and guide to younger homosexuals and will frequently invest a good deal of money and time in such an enterprise. So long as they do not try to initiate sexual approaches towards their "wards" they are accepted on this basis and the assumption of such a role enables them to feel needed, wanted and purposeful. This role is similar to that of the "queen" described by Evelyn Hooker (28).

c) Denial of sexuality and assumption of an asexual stance:

Kinsey (1) has demonstrated that males frequently remain sexually active well into their seventies and most certainly past the age of thirty-five. Therefore, when we observe homosexual men of thirty-five and forty denying that they feel sexual desire it is certainly necessary to look for alternative explanations. One such explanation is that such denial is essential to prevent a failure of self since the image of the "dirty old man" is the most derisive and ego-damaging one possible. This is a much more debilitating image in homosexual society than in straight society because so much of the homosexuals self-conception revolves around his sexuality. Therefore it is essential for the homosexual to keep one's sexual self-image at least partially intact to maintain the integrity of identity. When an aging homosexual finds himself in a situation where one of his basic drives, a drive that has been the focus of his life for many years, is condemned, then drastic psychological action is necessary. Such action may take the form of denial of sexuality or it may take the form of.

d) Withdrawal from homosexual society: The older homosexual may either drop into obscurity, retaining only a close retinue of friends, or else he may come into contact only with those portions of the society in which his "stigma", age, is not condemned. Thus, many older homosexuals frequent only the "wrinkle rooms" where their "disability" is the norm. The author would speculate that the process of "becoming an older homosexual" is probably very similar to the process of becoming a homosexual in the first place, a topic bearing further investigation.

How The Homosexual Community Functions For Its MembersQuote:

"....I don't think I'd call it the same thing as you (the author) do...It's not really a community the way you're putting it. I mean, there's no real organization you can see and then say "Ah-ha, that's it". Its more of a very loose thing. There are the bars. That's the main thing because that's where most people go. Then sometimes there are the neighborhoods, like here (The subject is referring to a section of Greenwich Village in New York City). That's not true all the time...It's (the community) more a completely different kind of thing...the ideas that people have about being gay. It's very subtle, not like taking a course or anything, but once you meet others who are in the same boat you find you begin to think a lot alike and you kind of take in the ideas that everyone else has about being gay and what its like...That's really a relief because you find the ideas are very different from what you thought they would be and they sort of get passed along... You feel like you're in a group even though physically you really aren't..."

The term "homosexual community" is perhaps not completely accurate in the sense that there are few geographical or organizational ties binding such a "community". There is nevertheless a feeling on the part of almost every homosexual with whom the author has come in contact, of being part of a group with a unique pattern of behavior. There seemed, in other words, to be a clear psychological differentiation between "we" and "them". To the degree that there is a common set of values and ideas, to the degree that such ideas are socially shared, and to the degree that such socially shared ideas form the basis for social behavior, we may then speak of a community. Let us now summarize the ways in which this community functions for its members. Though some of the ways have been made below to integrate and contrast these various factors:

Sexual Benefits: The community provides an obvious source of sexual partners. This was true especially for the bars which were frequented by 24 of the 25 interviewees. It was also true, to a lesser extent, for the baths (9 out of 25 on a regular basis). Other sources included parties, "tea rooms", prostitutes and other cruising places e.g. outdoor parks and rest areas.

The community not only provided partners but also fosters an atmosphere which grants legitimacy to the expression of sexual drives. Such legitimacy is something that the homosexual can obtain nowhere else. The author would guess that it probably plays a crucial role in the neutralization of any

residual guilt that the homosexual may feel in relation to his sexual activities. Although most homosexuals emphatically deny such guilt, it is difficult to believe that the conditioning of a lifetime, the very conditioning that kept many of them away from the homosexual community for years, suddenly disappears and is replaced by cheerful and willing acceptance. More probably we are dealing with a classic case of reduction of cognitive dissonance by social reinforcement i.e. the homosexual's present behavior pattern and his previously learned value systems are in irreconcilable conflict and such conflict is reduced, although probably not eliminated, by the social reinforcement, attituded and behavior patterns of his peers. The author believes that such conflict often festers below the surface in some homosexuals for many years but may come to light in exceptional circumstances. The most notable of these is the "aging" crisis when, once again, the homosexual begins to regard his sexuality as "dirty" and something to be repressed, very much as he did before he "came out". It is at this point that many homosexuals often marry and drop out of the sexual scene. If they are to continue in the sexual market place it may be anticipated that they go through another "coming Out" whereby they accept their role as older homosexuals and join the community appropriate to this status. The author actually has only fragmentary information on this topic because the older homosexual community imposes

a very high degree of segregation which he was not able to successfully breach. However, the notion of a double coming out process is a fascinating one and deserves further study, perhaps by an older researcher who can more easily obtain access to the relevant social cliques and institutions.

Another function that the homosexual community performs is the control of sexual behavior, very much in the way that the wider society exercises this function for its members. Admittedly such controls are much looser (and obviously are not formalized in terms of legal codes) and the range of acceptable behavior is much wider, but there are still proscriptions and standards. For example, it is expected in a bar that a participant in sexual pick ups will engage in a certain amount of polite conversation as a preliminary, that he will remain with his contact once he has accepted a "proposition", that he will honestly disclose any romantic entanglements such as a lover, etc. Another part of the control function would seem to be the structuring of long term sexual relationships in the form of sets of role expectations such as would be applied to a pair of lovers. Such structuring is also expressed in the form of the "Incest" taboo, whereby a homosexual may not have sex with his "friends" thereby saving the group as a whole from the deleterious effects of the jealousies and rivalries that would result. Besides providing sexual

partners, reducing dissonance, controlling and structuring sexual relationships, the community also protects such relationships by providing a safe setting where there is relative freedom from prosecution by the authorities for ostensibly illegal activities. This was true specially for the bars and baths which were almost never interferred with. It was also true, but to a lesser extent, for the street scene, where only 7 out of the 25 interviewees had been questioned by the police.

Given the objective fact that there is actually very little interference of a substantive nature in the homosexual scene by the authorities, the curious fact arises that most homosexuals continue to anticipate such interference. Some of this anticipation is due to the widely circulated beliefs and statements of gay liberation organizations, which are undoubtedly anxious to increase community solidarity in this way. Still, this does not seem sufficient to account for the pervasiveness of the belief. One alternative explanation for the belief is that it may reflect an internalized anticipated punishment for acts which the homosexual basically regards as moral transgressions. The mechanism is somewhat similar to the one a child uses when he looks around anxiously before he raids the cookie jar--even though his mother may not be home.

Social Benefits: The homosexual subculture provides a significant degree of social anonymity from the heterosexual society where the homosexual is regarded by various factions as freak, deviant, sick, criminal and alienated. Thus the bars and other institutions were perceived as comfortable places where "shame" was not a part of the expectable interaction and activities could be pursued in a relatively relaxed setting.

The fact that the bar is a relatively isolated institution is functional not only for the homosexual community, but for the larger society as well. Erikson (53) talks of the "boundaries" drawn around deviant parts of a society and how such boundaries serve both to define and contain deviance. The homosexual bar represents such a boundary. What goes on inside is deviant from the larger society's point of view but will be accepted by the authorities (and tacitly by the public) so long as it does not spill outside of the boundary that is the bar (and other designated areas e.g. "the block"). The author believes that, psychologically speaking, many homosexuals hold a somewhat analagous view. They would see, for example, holding hands with another male, to be perfectly acceptable within the bar but not acceptable on the street or in a public place. This non-acceptability would only be partially because of "shame" considerations i.e. the embarrassment of being seen or caught, but also because of built, an internal conviction regarding the non-acceptability of the behavior outside of the boundary. Such guilt seems to be psychologically

"compartmentalized" in the bar..

The energy required to maintain this degree of compartmentalization is high and probably derives from the pervasive social reinforcement in the bar. When such reinforcement is lacking, however, the compartmentalization is no longer able to be maintained and internal guilt becomes a reality again. It should be noted in this regard and that 20 of the sample felt guilty at some point in their lives before coming out but after frequenting the bars and other institutions, only 3 felt so. This reduction was also due to internalization (although perhaps somewhat temporary internalization) of the prevailing homosexual value structure with the predominant moer: "Gay is good..."

The homosexual subculture provides additional social benefits as well. For example, it provides a source of platonic friends. This was felt to be an important factor by 21 of the sample. It should be noted that 17 of the sample reported that their friends and associates were almost completely homosexual and therefore the importance of the community in providing a source of such associations should be not underestimated. Additionally, the community provides a social climate which serves as the focal point for the meeting of people with common interests. Twenty-four of the sample reported that they felt they had a great deal in common with other homosexuals. This was by no means limited to sexual interests but included such things as literature, gossip about particular people or situations,

familiarity with the homosexual scene and problems, etc. Many bars and other institutions, in this regard, provide activities of a social as well as a sexual nature including parties, dances, contests, educational and political groups, dating services, psychological referrals, etc. Sixteen of the 25 interviewees reported that they enjoyed the social nature of gay institutions.

Psychological Benefits: Several aspects of this have already been mentioned: Reduction of dissonance between the homosexuals present behavior and previously learned value systems and reduction of guilt by internalization of the prevailing mores. Another major contribution to the homosexual's psychological well being is the reduction of anxiety and ambiguity regarding his own identity. The homosexual comes into the subculture lacking many "self-anchors", especially those relating to heterosexual activities which are such an important part of adolescent identity. The community provides these anchors by providing a new set of normative role expectations, a set of concrete possibilities for manipulating and interacting with the environment, a clear differentiation of "we" (the homosexuals) from "they" (the heterosexuals), a means of neutralization of residual guilt, etc. The issue of the homosexual and the "self" was treated in the last section of the chapter on "Becoming A Homosexual" and will not be repeated here.

Another important psychological service that the community provides is that it fosters a sense of belonging to an "in" rather

than an "out" group. It is in this sense that the normative structure of the heterosexual society is reversed. This is well described by Becker (47) when he states that "outsiders, from the point of view of the person who is labeled deviant, may be the people who make the rules he has been found guilty of breaking" Fifteen of the sample reported that this sense of "belonging" and of security against an "outside" group was important to them. This feeling of group cohesiveness is something that every homosexual quickly learns when he enters the society and such cohesiveness serves to encourage "countermore" (by the standards of the heterosexual society) behavior. Redl and Wineman have specified the following conditions for the contagious effect of countermore behavior in a peer group:

- a) The "initiator" must openly act out in such a way that he gratifies an impulse that the rest of the members have been inhibiting; b) the initiator must display a lack of anxiety and guilt; c) the other members who perceive the initiator sanctions must have been undergoing for some time an intense conflict with respect to performing the forbidden act..." (54)

The above is a reasonably accurate description of what the new homosexual observes as he comes out.

The homosexual society also serves the psychological function of providing an outlet whereby emotional needs for love and affection can be satisfied also. Eighteen of the sample reported that they felt these needs could not be satisfied in any other setting. The reasoning behind their assumption on this issue was complex but basically seemed to revolve around the fact that many homosexuals

felt that their needs could be satisfied only by a "lover" relationship with a person who was fairly open and accepting about their own homosexuality. Such a partner would most likely be found at a bar or other gay institution because of the selection factors involved. The author would speculate that there is an additional unconscious determinant that led homosexuals to state that it was essential that their partners accept their own sexuality. If we assume some "redidual" guilt on the part of many inverts then it is likely that a partner who actually displays such guilt and inhibitions openly would stimulate an uncomfortable and stressful counter-reaction in his partner. It is also for this reason that most homosexuals have no desire to have extended relationships with heterosexuals.

The community also provides the participants with a positive sense of selfworth, as opposed to the mere absence of guilt. Many of the members of the community had previously felt devalued by both themselves and the society for the fact of their sexual orientation. After entering "the scene" they began to acquire a new conception of themselves as worthy and competent people who do not deserve to be devalued on the basis of what they term a "superficial" criterion. In this sense their reaction is no different from that of other groups that have been devalued and the psychological mechanism involved is to elevate the "superficial" criterion to something noble and good in itself. Take, for example, the phenomenon of "black pride" and the rallying cry "Black is Beautiful", the "woman power" of the women's liberation move-

ment, etc. In all such organizations and movements the psychological benefits are probably co-equal in importance with the practical, social and political ones. In the case of homosexuality, such psychological benefits can only be properly understood if we consider homosexuality not just a sexual proclivity but a social orientation of the widest kind.

Other Benefits: In many ways the community provides a force towards changing social and legal attitudes towards homosexuality. This is accomplished mainly by gay liberation organizations by both educational and politically active means.

Many homosexuals have been extremely frustrated by what they consider their "double-bind" i.e. they feel that they cannot "help" being homosexual and engaging in homosexual acts while at the same time they cannot completely escape society's condemnation and stigmatization for such acts. According to the "frustration-aggression" hypothesis such frustration will lead to aggression and yet, realistically, such aggression leads to another double bind in that it will tend to bring severe consequences against the person who engages in it. The homosexual community provides outlets for this aggression in several ways: by means of self-deprecatory humor; by means of mutual and group condemnation of straight society; and by means of becoming politically involved in gay liberation organizations.

The homosexual community also serves its members by perpetuating itself, as all organizations must do if they are to survive.

The bar recruits new members when previous members encounter a new sexual partner and "spread the word". Additionally, gay liberation organizations actively recruit new members by advertising both in periodicals and by the well publicized nature of their activities.

The community also provides sources of support when one of its members experiences an unfavorable interaction with some aspect of straight society. Such interaction may be psychological, it may be a matter of discrimination or difficulty with legal authorities. In the case of psychological interaction, such as might occur if a parent accidentally discovered the homosexuality of a son, the homosexual can expect a great deal of sympathy and support. At times like these the residual guilt mentioned earlier tends to rear its head again and many homosexuals go through a period of self-doubt and searching which is similar to when they first came out. This period would not occur if previously incorporated societal values were not still operating. The community will band together to "repress" these previous incorporations and "free" the "victim" of pressure.

Another benefit that the community provides is more subtle and has to do with the issue of social difference and social judgement. It is very often the case in our culture that groups that are "different" (as a Jew is different in his religion, a black in his skin color, a homosexual in his sexual orientation) are judged to be different on many characteristics having nothing to do with the one that is actually responsible for the

"difference". The society's judgement regarding these other characteristics is often negative. Thus it is that Jews are seen as cheap and stingy, blacks as violent and criminal, and homosexuals as unworthy human beings in almost every respect. Undoubtedly, the homosexual who has grown up in our culture has internalized some of these judgements and often may become very anxious and hypersensitive to the opinions of others. The gay culture, however, is a place where a wide latitude of conduct and beliefs are permitted and this social approval of diversity and non-judgemental atmosphere may do much to make the homosexual feel more at ease.

Finally, in a more concrete sense, a multitude of services are available to community members including: psychological "crisis" counseling; referrals to sympathetic mental health practitioners; legal aide; etc. It is these concrete benefits coupled with the psychological and social ones discussed earlier that make the homosexual community less a sexual than a social community. Thus the term, homosociality, is probably more in tune with actual reality and provides insights into how and why people who are different band together.

How The Homosexual Community Is Detrimental To Its Members

Quote:

- E: "Is there any way that you feel being a member of the homosexual scene and associating with other gay people has been damaging to you?"
- S: "Do you mean hos has being gay hurt me?"
- E: "No, not just your sexuality in isolation. I mean your being a part of the scene and being with other gay people."
- S: "Oh, well, let's see...I don't think I ever really thought about it in that way...I'm not really sure what you mean."
- E: "Well, we were talking before about how other gay people, meeting them, had helped you. You were saying that it made you feel much better about yourself and that it made you and your lover feel as if you had a real relationship going. Now do you think that there are some ways in which associating with those same people has hurt you or some way in which it has not been so beneficial?"
- S: "Oh, I see what you mean...Yes, I think so...Do you want just my experiences or do you want a general view?"
- E: "I think all the information you could give me would be helpful."
- S: "Well, getting older, for one thing. Before I came out I never felt so afraid of that as I do now. The worst thing is not even that you can't get sex but I've seen people come into the bar who were older. Everyone thinks its dirty somehow and they all make fun of the poor guy. Once you're gay you really begin to take on the idea about Dirty Old Men. I think that's really sad and it bothers me- or maybe scares me is a better way to put it because I have to face that sooner or later..."
- E: "Any other way in which you think the gay community is harmful?"
- S: "Well, the attitude about sex. Most gay people support the idea that sex is O.K. with anyone all the time. Sometimes that's good but it can go too far. Like if you have a lover, he's still fair game. I've had that happen and sometimes I really worry about it. Some day a deal is going to come along and then, who knows?"
- E: "Any other way?"
- S: "Well, the only other thing I can think of is that you kind of get sucked in after a while and you get kind of isolated. I don't see many straights but I think there's too much paranoia about that..."
- E: "Any other say?"
- S: "Maybe one more...It has to do with looks. Now, I'm kind of average but I've found that many people seem to be looking for a super-stud and there aren't many people who can live up to that so you can get into a situation where you really feel lousy and worthless because you aren't better looking. Now, if I was straight I don't think that would matter so much. There would be a lot of other things. With this it's more restricted. Other things help but looks are the main thing...It's really sad what that does to people..."

In many ways the unique set of norms that comprise the homosexual community supports its members and legitimizes activities and behaviors that the participants cannot find elsewhere. In other ways, however, these legitimizations and standards exert an ultimately harmful effect on the participants. Let us briefly summarize these effects:

1) The Single Standard Criterion: In the gay world the primary criterion for judging the worth and inherent value of people is often unidimensional. It is based on a combination of masculine appearance, looks and body build and tends largely to exclude other factors such as personality, intelligence, sense of humor, and so on. This is not to say that factors of this sort are not important in extended relationships. However, the homosexual who does not rate "high" on the primary criterion may have trouble making sexual contacts, especially if he is not fairly aggressive. Since, in the homosexual society, sexual contacts precede more affectional relationships rather than follow them, the "average" homosexual may find himself lonely, devalued and unable to initiate more permanent relationships.

Furthermore, such devaluation tends to become internalized as the homosexual accepts the normative standards he finds around him. The author would speculate that the reasons for such internalization are:

a) Many homosexuals have previously internalized a negative self-concept before they entered homosexual society and their present

devaluation confirms their "theory" about their own worth.

b) "Success" in the American culture is often predicated around successful interpersonal relationships. This is especially true in late adolescence and early adulthood. The homosexual (who is, of course also a member of the wider society) has already internalized this value. When he enters the homosexual subculture and does not meet with social success (while many around him do), rather than abandon the previous learning and incorporations of a lifetime, he often assumes that his devaluation and lack of success is "justified" on the basis of his physical characteristics.

c) For the new homosexual, the pressure to accept the normative standards of the group is substantial because such standards provide a justification for present behavior and a psychological relief from guilt over present activities and orientation. Under this type of pressure the novice is hardly likely to be terribly selective about which parts of the normative structure he internalizes and which he does not. Furthermore, if he psychologically differentiates one part of the normative standard (the part concerning physical appearance) as being "wrong" or incorrect then he may be forced to conclude that other parts (e.g. the prevailing value relating to the justifiability of homosexual behavior) are likewise incorrect. Such a conclusion, however unconscious, would expose him to a great deal of psychological stress and anxiety regarding his present behavior.

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When the interview sample was asked what they thought to be

the most important characteristic that had a bearing on their attractiveness to other homosexuals, all 25 replied with some variation on the theme of "looks". When asked the characteristic that had the most bearing on other homosexuals' attractiveness to them, 20 out of 25 answered with some variation on this theme. When asked if they were satisfied with their appearance, fully 16 of the 25 said "no". When asked "Why not?", the following reply was typical:

"...because the bar is like a meat rack, it really is. I've seen guys come in and lean against the rail like they're showing off a steak. Now, naturally, everybody's looking to buy just the good red meat. They don't want the fatty stuff or the older stuff, or anything that doesn't look just right. My God, that really makes me sick. When I do it I feel like I'm on display and I look over to the side and see someone who looks better than me and I feel lousy...like the puppy in a cage who tries to look cute but nobody will buy him...I'm exaggerating but it's almost like the rest of me doesn't count...I mean, it really makes me angry but there's no way of fighting it...Some dumb fuck will be standing there with biceps and an eight inch cock but maybe he didn't finish high school. Maybe he's dull as hell with a swelled head to boot but he'll be the one that gets all the tricks and everyone will stare at him and no one will give me a second look... It really makes me mad...I know I'm bright and fairly intelligent. I mean, I can talk and I'm pretty warm and I've got a lot of other things going for me but no one looks at those....They don't really count. I'm really not sure about the whole thing. Sometimes I think the same way they do..."

In short, the single standard criterion tends to promote a state of affairs such that many homosexuals cannot meet the standards of attractiveness; furthermore they can do little or

nothing, except use cosmetic aids, to improve their position. It is notable at this point, that some of the gay liberation organizations, especially the Gay Activists Alliance, are aware of this situation and are trying to remedy it in three ways: The first is by deliberately creating a non-bar social atmosphere in which physical and sexual expectations are minimized. The second is by espousing a type of gay "counter-culture" in which the traditional standards of physical attractiveness are not adhered to. Third, liberation groups hold a number of educational sessions and workshops where they focus precisely on this problem in a group setting.

2) Aging: To be old in American society is a liability; to be old in the homosexual society is a curse. Age makes the homosexual subject to derision and stracism from his cultural group, to social isolation, and often to sexual abstinence (if he cannot find sexual contacts). Furthermore, the age at which the homosexual is considered "old" is much younger than in the larger society. In the general American society the "aged" are usually considered to be those past the age of retirement and no longer economically productive. In homosexual society, old age sets in at about 35 when sexual attractiveness begins to decline.

The way an older homosexual is considered by his younger peers is some what analagous to the way an older woman is considered by most men. In general she is not considered

sexually attractive, although there are obviously some exceptions. The situation is not analagous to the way older men are considered by many women. Many older men still retain their sexual attractiveness to women well into their fifties. Perhaps this paradox can be explained in terms of the fundamental parameters of sexual attractiveness for men and women. For men, sexual attraction is an immediate sensation based primarily on visual stimulation. For women, it is often less direct and based on many other qualities such as tactility, warmth, personality, intuition, etc. Given this, it is not surprising that homosexual men, since they are males will rely primarily upon visual stimuli and a man who is pushing 40 will be seen as considerably less desirable.

It is at this point that the "oldster" can no longer make out in the bar and must face an increasingly bleak future unless he has managed to make a permanent arrangement with a lover or other type of liason. To a large degree, the following is due to the prevalence of the single standard criterion under which the "aged" do not have any compensatory characteristics (e.g. wisdom, wit, money, sophistication, experience, etc.) that are sufficiently valuable to other members of the subculture to offset the decline in sexual attractiveness.

Of course, it must be realized that the single standard criterion operates for all age ranges. The net result is that many homosexuals are sexual "Don Juans", seeking one sexual experience after another. This is due to the fact

that since the partners were chosen on the basis of their sexual characteristics, rather than for complementary attributes of personality, it often happens that the relationship will not be successful from an interpersonal point of view. Obviously intimate interpersonal relationships are more likely to succeed when some attention is paid to the selection of appropriate interpersonal variables rather than accepting such variables at random. When the relationship then fails the homosexual may go on to seek another partner and often repeats the same cycle. The "aged" cannot do this because they cannot usually obtain sexual partners and so they often drop out of the bar scene.

The author was unable to discover what happens to these "oldsters" nor did the interviewees or other people to whom the author spoke have a very clear idea either. Some occasionally surface in the street scene, the baths, or the "wrinkle rooms" but most seem simply to drop out of sight, perhaps to retire to friendship cliques or other relatively covert social organizations. The fact that the location and existence of approximately half the homosexual population is unknown to the other half speaks for an incredible degree of segregation. Undoubtedly a study focusing on older homosexuals (assuming they could be located), centering on differences in mores and morals, entry routes, etc., would add a

great deal to the understanding of the gay community as well as its relationship to the broader society at large.

When asked if they were afraid of growing old, 22 of the sample answered positively. Their reasons included: loss of sexual attractiveness, fears of social isolation; fears of depression and loss of self-respect. Understandably, anxieties about aging seemed to be more pronounced in the older subjects. However, the oldest interviewee, age 46, seemed relatively content:

"...I don't trick much anymore. It's not that I couldn't but there are a lot of problems in trying. I know a lot of people and I'm very content with that but I do think that if I made any kind of a sexual notion toward them it would be a very odd situation...I can either keep them as friends or I can get some of them to go to bed with me once or twice, but I can't do both...I'm not sure that I want to anyway. I think I've had my fill of some things...I've tricked for a very long time and I think I've gotten to the point where it's not that important to me anymore... There are compensations, other kinds of things... I like my work, I have a lot of friends and I think I can say I'm a happy human being... I am lonely though...I suppose it sounds corny, but the end of the night is the worst time...when there's no one..."

The mutual exclusivity of friends and bedmates is true of the older homosexual for a different reason than when he was young. At the latter time the "incest" taboo was the primary reason. For the older invert, however, the recruitment of friends for sexual activities would be regarded as a gross overpresumption on a friendship because: a) the older homo--

sexual is no longer only considered sexually attractive;
 b) it violates the "status order" of the community i. e.
 young is high, old is low; c) it will tend to cast aspersions
 on the psychological integration of the younger participant
 by the rest of the community; d) it may, the homosexuals be-
 lieve, frighten potential members or tricks away from the
 group because of fear they may have to become sexually in-
 volved with the old member.

The feeling of homosexuals toward their older peers is
 more than just distaste-it involves something approaching re-
 pulsion. Such feelings seem to be so strong that they cannot
 be explained just on the basis of sexual unattractiveness.
 An alternative explanation to this phenomenon may lie in the
 prevalence of the single standard and its internalization by
 the members of the subculture. We thus have a situation
 where most homosexuals, already insecure to begin with, be-
 lieve that the main determinant of their self-worth is ever-
 fleeting physical attractiveness and youth. They can, of
 course, foresee that someday they will lose this youth and
 with it, they believe, their worth as human beings. This
 undoubtedly created tremendous fear and anxiety. One way
 to minimize such anxiety is to avoid, with a vengeance, people
 and situations that are reminiscent of the condition to come.
 Hence, the revulsion for the "aged".

3) Promiscuity: The homosexual community supports promiscuity.

There is no double standard of overt condemnation but somewhat covert support as there is in the heterosexual community. To a certain extent this legitimizes a pattern of behavior which will tend to take place anyway when all the factors (e.g. no risk of pregnancy, economic independence, a lack of social, as opposed to sexual, gathering places, etc.) are considered. On the other hand, however, there are drawbacks involved. One is that promiscuity constitutes a realistic threat for established relationships. Although many homosexuals maintain that an "arrangement" between lovers will not be destructive to the relationship, an analysis of the reasons for the break-up of extended relationships reveals this not to be the case. Of the 9 interviewees who previously had lovers but did not now, 7 involved a case where at least one of the partners "tricked out". This commonly seemed to lead to an emotional involvement with a third person and the consequent break-up of the "marriage".

A second drawback of the promiscuity norm felt by the participants in the subculture was a certain superficiality in relationships. This was well expressed by one of the interviewees:

"...when sex is so easy to get it's hard to get to know someone. There's a constant search for the Joe Namath of the bedroom. Personally speaking, I've never found him...The thing is this-in anything that goes on between two people there are bound to be some kind of problems.

I don't care if they're gay, straight, or char-
truse. I think its part of being human...But
if you can go out and find another sex partne:
the minute things get rough a lot of people do
that. They never get to explore the other per-
son as a human being. I think straights have it
a little different but even that's changing.
I think they tend to stick longer, maybe be-
cause they're sexually curious, if nothing else.
Then, bu the time they get to sex they have a
pretty good idea of who they're dealing with..."

A third drawback was expressed by many of the interviewees
as a vague statement that sexuality was "loosing its meaning"
for them. They felt that the constant experience of having one
"trick" after another leads to a type of cynicism such that
they are unprepared to deal with emotional involvement when
they do find it:

"...It gets to be the same. Basically there are
only so many positions and then what do you do?
Its like that Peggy Lee song "Is That All There
Is?" That wouldn't even be so bad but I get to
the point sometimes where I just don't care any-
more...I figure, why bother. It'll be about the
same as last night, and then last week, and then
the week before. Oh, the body will be different
all right, but then it will be the same. I once
saw this picture called "Women In Love" and there
was a line in it that saed: "Better to be dead
than to live a meaningless life of repetition and
repetition and repetition"...There's another part
of it. You hear a lot of lines when you go to
bed. It's part of the game. You say that you like
the other person and usually they say the same
thing. If you're especially good you can make it
convincing. There are people I've met who can
win the Academy Award, believe me...The funny
thing is that they don't mean to hurt anyone.
Sometimes I get so sick of hearing that garbage
I'd just rather fuck and be done with it...I
hope there has to be more than that but I wonder

if I could recognize the real thing if I heard it...I've heard the imitation so often that its "Peter and the Wolf" every time...I don't want to be cynical but I'm not sure if I can help it..."

It is quite evident to the author that the homosexual's promiscuity not only leads to an increasingly negative and cynical outlook towards human relationships but also prevents the formation of the kind of stable extended relationships that might relieve such an outlook. Therefore, we may logically ask: Why is the homosexual so promiscuous?

Martin Hoffman (56), in a summary of the homosexual community called "The Gay World", suggests that gay promiscuity is a function of the psychodynamic factors that led the individual to make a homosexual object choice in the first place. Hoffman believes that the most frequently practised homosexual act of fellatio is an attempt by the homosexual to "incorporate" another male's masculinity to bolster his won deficient ego. Since, in reality, this is impossible, the homosexual will move on to partner after partner in the hope that, the next time, the incorporation will succeed.

The present author prefers an explanation grounded more in social as well as pragmatic terms:

The homosexual has internalized certain values normative to Western society, one of which dictates that males must not be emotionally intimate or emotionally dependent upon other males. Such internalizations, in the form of unconscious guilt and avoidance, come into play when the homosexual tries to form a stable relationship. In other words, while homo-

sexuals can retain their masculine self-image in spite of going to bed with another man, if he tries to violate the norms concerned with the subtleties of male-male emotional relationships, he will experience guilt, self-rejection, and suffer the "loss" of his masculinity. One way to avoid this is to avoid emotionally intimate relationships and the result, ergo is promiscuity.

4) Isolation: Becoming a career homosexual often involves a relative isolation from the larger society. Seventeen of the sample reported that their friends and associates were almost exclusively homosexual. This implies that they are excluding from their lives approximately 96% (that proportion of the population which Kinsey does not report as being exclusively homosexual) of the rest of the world. When these 17 were asked if they felt limited by not having straight friends and by withdrawing from heterosexual contact, 12 replied in the affirmative. Things they felt were negatively affected included family relationships, friends, business associations and what might be termed "general social sophistication".

To a certain extent, this type of isolation is dictated by the values of the larger society which designates the homosexual community as an "out" group, thus forcing a redefinition by that community such that the heterosexual society becomes the "out" group and they, the "in" group. Whatever the reasons, however, the fact remains that the homosexual community has

detectable mores of antipathy toward straight society and these mores tend to encourage the homosexual to withdraw from the larger society. Erikson (53) points out that the boundaries between deviant and non-deviant portions of a society serve both to define and contain the deviancy. Such containment, is tacitly promoted by both groups, so that they will not have to come into stressful contact. The lack of such contact, however, with its opportunities for re-education, thus tends to perpetuate itself-something like the rat in the cage who can't get to the female rat because he never discovers that the shock has been turned off.

It must be realized that, at this particular point in time, the homosexual community is limited in what it can offer its members. Sex and partners are present in abundance but there are few provisions for other kinds of social activities, cultural pursuits, educational pursuits, etc. At the same time, the community effectively imposes a large degree of isolation on its members and thus, effectively prevents them from engaging in these activities in the heterosexual society. The net result is that many homosexuals lead a very restricted type of life which consists of large segments of time spent in bars and a dearth of other activities. This situation is slowly changing, mainly due to the efforts of various gay liberation organizations which are concerned with establishing a wider social base for homosexuality.

On Gay LiberationQuote:

"...For most of my life I felt sick...I saw other people in the bars and that helped a little but all that really changed was that I saw a bunch of sick people in one place...I still thought of it more like a prison in the sense that there were a bunch of sick people all together and they didn't feel guilty about what they did...The thing was that they were still doing something wrong and that's what I felt then...Finally, when I began to go to the Kilos (a gay liberation society) meetings I got a much more positive view of the thing...There's the whole idea of gay pride and the idea is not that there's nothing wrong with being gay but that it's actually a positive thing...It's like "Black is Beautiful..."

Quote:

"...The whole society is so goddamn fucked-up! Jesus! You cannot imagine what it's like to live everyday knowing that if the people around you knew what you were half of them would spit in your face!...I began to believe it! I actually began to believe that shit! I used to think: 'David-you are one hell of a sick pervert'...Finally, I couldn't stand it. I began to really rebel. I used to walk around in a fuckin'dress, I was so angry! I just wanted to say: 'Who the hell do you think you are!.... I had had it, up to here! I kept saying: 'Who's crazy? Me or them?'...Gay liberation, especially the GAA (this reference is to Gay Activists Alliance, a gay liberation group based in New York City) I think, convinced me that it was them...I'm at the point now where I don't have to go in drag anymore. I can just be who I am...I feel free...I can say: "This is who I am, I'm me, I'm a human being, I have the same need to be loved like anybody else and I just happen to be gay so take it or leave it'..."

Quote:

"...It's political. We are not going to stand around like pigs in the slaughter house. It's the same with black lib and with SDS and all those other organizations. We don't like things the way they are and we are going to change them..."

The term "gay liberation" actually refers to a number of different organizations, each somewhat different in character and scope, which have in common the fact that they are social and political organizations of homosexuals which operate in more than just a "sexual" context.

The "old" homophile movement has existed since the early fifties and is exemplified by such organizations as the Mattachine Society which was basically a group of older, more established, homosexuals. This group provided various social functions (e.g. dances, get-togethers, parties, etc.) for its members, but usually in a very discreet manner and setting. There was also some quiet, low-profile, lobbying for homosexual civil rights, abolition of the sodomy laws, equal housing and employment, etc. The existence of this group was not known to the vast majority of homosexuals and members were apparently screened, at least in the early days of its existence, to assure their potential discretion.

Until 1969 the Mattachine society was more or less the only major established group on the homosexual scene. Then, in June of that year, a Greenwich Village bar, called "the Stonewall" was raided by the police after a particularly heavy series of raids against several bars in the Village. Anger and resentment in the homosexual community was high and the result was that, instead of obeying police directions during the raid, the crowd attacked the raiders and barricaded them inside the bar. They then overturned

and burned several police cars and when reinforcements from the Tactical Police Force arrived the crowd began to stone them with bottles. Finally the riot was contained but this incident led to the organization of several "liberation" groups that were more active than the Mattachine Society. The leaders of such groups were fairly astute and they realized that one very effective way to deal with police raids was not to patronize bars which were subject to harassment by the police. Since most of the bars were syndicate "controlled" the owners prevailed on the "powers that be" to deal with the police in a more effective manner (e.g. bigger bribes) saying that, unless this was done, the bar would close for lack of customers and everybody would be the loser. This proved to be a very effective tactic and within the year's end, almost all the raids on homosexual establishments in New York City were brought to an end. This is a most interesting example of the cooperation of several antagonistic elements in a social system: It was an advantage to the homosexual community because they no longer had to contend with police harassment at bars. It was also an aid to the bar owners and their illegal "protectors" since, once police harassment was minimized, the number of customers went up substantially. It was an advantage to the police because they received bigger pay-offs. The main beneficiary, however, was the gay liberation movement which, on the basis of its seemingly remarkable success to the naive observer, began to attract members in droves. This movement then divided into two separate but related movements based on the degree

of activism that the members desired.

The most active movement, generally called The Gay Liberation Front, was patterned after various radical organizations e.g. the Black Panthers and linked homosexual oppression to the repression of a number of other groups and issues. They were clearly a multi-issues organization which catered to a "leftist" clientele.

The less active movement, generally called the Gay Activist Alliance, was an outgrowth of the Gay Liberation Front and consisted of those people who felt that the homosexual cause needed a one-issue organization which would also not be quite so extreme in its political outlook.

Recently, a fourth gay movement, called the National Gay Task Force, has arisen. This is a group of homosexual professionals who believe that the most effective way to effect change is by the influence of people who are already highly placed.

Along with the actual organizations exist a wide variety of publications. Each organization has its house periodical but in addition there are several other widely read papers and magazines: "The Advocate" is the most widely circulated homosexual newspaper and carries articles on current legal cases, current personalities who are thought to be homosexual, discussions of various aspects of homosexual life, advertisements for bars and baths, personal ads for sexual services and prostitution

(usually phrased somewhat euphemistically), and commercial advertising. "Queen's Quarterly", "David's Thing", and "Gay Magazine" are other publications which are quite similar to "Playboy" in content except that their tone is considerably more explicit.

"After Dark" is a Boston-based "literary" magazine which caters to a largely gay clientele but is not obviously homosexual.

The services that gay liberation organizations perform for their members include the following: parties, get-togethers, information as to the location of bars, baths and other gay institutions, crises counseling, referral to psychotherapists, referral to physicians for medical needs e.g. treatment of venereal disease, providing a forum for political influence, providing legal aid in case of trouble with the authorities, providing miscellaneous social services e.g. securing a homosexual roommate or date, educational functions and religious functions (there is actually a homosexual church called the Metropolitan Community Church in several areas of the country), etc.

Nine of the interviewees were members of gay liberation organizations (in fact, 8 of the interviewees were volunteers from such organizations) and an additional 5 had at least gone to an occasional meeting. All of the interviewees were aware of the existence of such groups. The regular members listed the benefits of membership basically as follows: helps to achieve a sense of "self-worth"; helps to reduce guilt; good place for meeting people; social activities are enjoyable; something to become "involved with" means of "expression"; and

help when in tight situations. None of the interviewees except one say any disadvantages to membership. This one disadvantage was described as " getting pulled into some kind of political activity where you can be exposed".

The age range of the participants in the liberation movement was much wider and more evenly distributed than in any other part of the homosexual scene. This was not true for organizational chapters which were affiliated with colleges and universities but was true for the movement as a whole. The author judged that this wide distribution was probably due to several facts:

a) The sexual pick-up is not the predominant goal of the majority of interactions in this context although it obviously does happen. Therefore there was not the premium placed on youth and attractiveness that there usually is in the gay world.

b) The leaders of gay liberation organizations seem to be quite sophisticated and realize that one of the damaging aspects of the gay world is the emphasis on looks and sexuality. They seem to realize that this type of emphasis limits the type of social interactions that can take place. Therefore they make an active effort to recruit older people by seeking professionals (who tend to be older) as consultants and by "spreading the word" that persons of any age are welcome.

At this point it is interesting to speculate on why a homosexual would make himself a public member of an obviously socially tabooed group. The author believes several alternative explanations are possible, either alone or in combination:

- a) It provides a justification for the homosexual's inner doubts and insecurities about his sexual preference. Such justification is a prime feature of gay liberation groups and is no doubt very influential in attracting new members. The author feels that there is often a deep seated residual "disgust" in many homosexuals concerning their behavior which they have not completely disinternalized and which was probably acquired from early parental and social conditioning. Joining a gay liberation organization with its group support and active embracing of the homosexual normative standard may enable the homosexual to signal himself, probably unconsciously, that his "disgust" is not rational, nor shared by others, and is therefore probably no valid.
- b) It provides a socially acceptable means of expressing the rage and anger many homosexuals feel toward heterosexual society. This can be appreciated when it is realized that most homosexuals function by concealing some very significant part of their lives and associations, a concealment which most heterosexuals, in the reverse position, would find considerably stressful. Furthermore such homosexuals realize that to break that concealment would subject them to extreme derision and possibly to severe social penalties. This is a situation that is both oppressive and frustrating in the sense that the homosexuals feel that they are hopelessly outnumbered. In accordance with the tenets of the "frustration-aggression" hypothesis we may presume that

this will lead to some type of aggression. But then it must be realized that such aggression would involve severe penalties if it were done in an individual manner. Therefore such aggression must be performed either in a manner that is socially acceptable or one that has sufficient group support to ensure the safety of the aggressors. Gay liberation organizations provide the opportunity for this type of aggression. For example, Gay Activists Alliance frequently conducts raids and demonstrations (called "Zaps") against those that discriminate against homosexuals and from descriptions given by several of the interviewees, such "Zaps" involve a considerable venting of anger and frustration, by the participants.

c) Membership in a gay liberation organization may help to reduce role conflict. Talcott Parsons (55) points out:

"...the consequences of the factors in the genesis of deviant motivation and behavior...may be and often are compounded by...role conflict. By this is meant the exposure of the actor to conflicting sets of legitimized role expectations such that complete fulfillment of both is realistically impossible. It is necessary to compromise, that is the sacrifice some at least of both sets of expectations, or to choose one alternative and sacrifice the sets of expectations, or to choose one alternative and sacrifice the other. In any case the actor is exposed to negative sanctions and, so far as both sets of values are internalized, to internal conflict..."

The homosexual experiences a conflict between his homosexual and heterosexual role expectations. Both have been significantly internalized. He may choose the homosexual role but the author believes that this would be only at the

expense of an internal violation of previously incorporated heterosexual role norms. When the strength of both sets of role expectations is approximately equal the conflict will be greatest. Anything that will tip the balance very much to one side will reduce such a conflict. One psychological way to tip the balance between homosexual and heterosexual standards is to espouse "Gay is Good". Another way is to redefine the situation such that a "neutralizer" is incorporated, the "neutralizer" being the belief "Previously learned heterosexual standards are not valid because the people who made them are prejudiced and irrational".

Gay liberation organizations do much to incorporate the above belief into their member's value systems. There is a constant emphasis on this topic and the author believes that this type of role conflict reduction is crucial to understanding the widespread influence of the liberation movement in homosexual society, an influence which goes far beyond the actual number of members.

d) In a society that is losing many of its "traditional" values and becoming increasingly, as Reisman puts it, "other directed", individuals are often alienated and frequently turn to their peer group for meaning and direction. Most homosexuals are quite alienated in the sense that they are often estranged from their heterosexual peer group. At the same time, "confinement" in the homosexual community presents a certain dearth of meaningful activities. Many

homosexuals find themselves in a situation where they spend much of their time "in the bar" but are dissatisfied with the superficiality and the repetitiveness of this environment and certainly cannot use their associations with bars as a central theme to provide meaning to their lives.

Membership in a gay liberation organization, however, often provides such a theme. Five of the 9 members said, in one form or another, that their association with a liberation organization was "central" to their life, that it gave them an opportunity to express their deepest feelings and beliefs and that it helped them to "know who they are".

In conclusion, the author believes that the self-liberation of the homosexual is intimately tied to his social liberation and the homosexuals, as a group, will continue to remain conflict-ridden so long as they continue to be devalued and dehumanized by the larger society of which they are inevitably a part.

Summary

The author studied the process of homosexual identification and the effect of the homosexual subculture on the life-style of the homosexual by means of the administration of a semi-structured interview to 25 "career" homosexuals and observation, both covert and overt, of homosexuals in bars, baths, the street, and as members of gay liberation organizations. The main findings of the study were that:

One, homosexuality must be considered a wide ranging social as well as a sexual phenomenon. The author suggests that the term "homosociality" may be appropriate for conveying the group nature of many homosexual interactions, as well as the fact that much of the homosexual's behavior represents the social role he has evolved as a "career" homosexual.

Two, there exists a reasonably definite sequence of steps which seem to be significant in terms of "becoming" a homosexual. They are: a) the point at which the subject first had fantasies about homosexual acts or romantic attachments to males; b) his first sexual experience with a male; c) his realization that he is homosexually oriented; d) his first contact with other homosexuals in a social setting and; e) his entrance into homosexual society.

Three, there exists a homosexual community in the sense that there are community "institutions" such as bars, baths,

political and social organizations, in the sense that the social interaction of homosexuals permits them to share a common set of ideas, values, role perceptions, and in the sense that such socially shared ideas form the basis for their social behavior.

Four, this community functions for its members in certain crucial ways: it provides a source of sexual partners; it fosters an atmosphere which grants legitimacy to the expression of sexual drives; it controls and structures sexual behavior; it protects its members from the authorities; it allows its members to maintain their isolation from an often hostile world; it provides a source of platonic friends and social activities; it reduces dissonance between the homosexuals present behavior and previously learned value systems; it promotes a reduction of guilt by allowing the homosexual to internalize community mores relating to the "value" of being homosexual; it fosters a sense of belonging to an "in" rather than an "out" group; it provides an outlet whereby emotional needs for love and affection can be satisfied; it provides the participants with a positive sense of self--worth; it provides a force toward changing prevailing social and legal attitudes; and it provides support to its members should they experience an unfavorable interaction with the "straight" community.

Five, in many ways this community and its value system is ultimately detrimental to the homosexual. There exists in the homosexual community a "single-standard" criterion by which physical attractiveness becomes a variable of overwhelming importance in interpersonal and social interaction. This leads to problems in the formation of intimate relationships and severe conflict for older homosexuals. Additionally the community's sanction of promiscuity leads to difficulty in the formation of stable relationships, a superficiality in the relationships that do exist, an increasingly negative and cynical outlook towards human relationships and a feeling on the part of many homosexuals that even sexuality itself is losing its meaning for them.

Six, many homosexuals enter the homosexual community with a deficient "sense of self" in that they have lacked many of the usual "self-anchors" because, in adolescence, these are often based on heterosexual activities and relationships. There are thus changes that occur in the concept of the "self" in the course of a homosexual career. Such changes are a process and seem to occur in three contexts: in the establishment of self when the homosexual "comes out"; in the maintenance of self when he is an active homosexual in contact with homosexual society; and in the failure of self that may occur as he ages and begins to lose his sexual attractiveness.

Seven, there exist homosexual "marriages" with distinct similarities and differences in relation to the heterosexual

institution. Such marriages are unstable partially because the wider society does not grant legitimacy to them and partially because the mores of the homosexual community do not promote stable relationships.

Eight, the homosexual is exposed to many societal pressures of an internal, social and legal variety. The social fabric and mores of the homosexual community are instrumental in alleviating such pressures.

Nine, there exist organizations of homosexuals for social and political purposes which are known as "Gay liberation" organizations. Such organizations try to bring about the social liberation of the homosexual and such social liberation is intimately tied to the self-liberation of the homosexual as a human being and functioning member of our society.

Appendix 1-Interview Questions

Note: The interview form was not given to the subjects but used rather as a guide for the experimenter. It is designed to permit exploration of relevant areas as well as to provide enough flexibility so that areas suggested by the subjects can be thoroughly explored as well. Below are listed examples of questions from substantive areas covered. In actual practice the questions may take on slightly different form depending upon the context of the particular interview.

a) Demographic information: age; date of birth; city and date of birth; residences for one year or longer; religious background and degree of adherence, occupation at present; occupational history; etc.

b) Early family history: parent's economic status; parent-child relationships; attachment to mother; attachment to father; parent's personality; number, sex, personality, interactions with, closeness to, activities with, siblings; friendship history; institutional or military service; etc.

c) Heterosexual history: early sex attitudes and source; age at onset of adolescence; masturbatory history; pre-adolescent sexual history; pre-marital heterosexual petting; marital intercourse; etc.

d) Homosexual history: pre-adolescent homosexual wishes, thoughts, desires, activities, frequencies, partners, etc.; extent of experience with a person of the same sex as a function of age; age of sexual partners; circumstances surrounding the acts; subject's feelings about the acts; initiation of approach; financial arrangements; place; time; satisfaction; subject's fears; partner's fears; description of activity; number of times repeated with same partner; sexual orientation of partner; degree of initiation into other homosexual activities, settings and acquaintances; history of the subsequent relationship (if any) with the partner; time the subject realized he was homosexual and why; feelings about the initial realization of homosexual orientation; point in relation to experience and subcultural acculturation that this took place; how realization influenced further activities and feelings; etc.

e) Self-perception as a function of age and homosexual experience: subject's feelings about the ideal homosexual relationship, the typical relationship and his own relationships; changes in feelings about himself as a function of various stages of the "coming out" process, as a result of different experiences; influence of coming out on non-sexual activities and feelings.

f) Fear and social relationships as a function of age and homosexual experience: how is circle of friends affected by coming out, by being homosexual, etc; how subject feels about these changes; when he first became aware of these changes and how he reacted to them; degree of satisfaction with peer and social relationships; relation to "straights"; change in relations up to "straights"; etc.

g) General lifestyle as a function of age and homosexual experience: daily routine; amount and nature of time spent in gay activities; feelings about lifestyle; changes in lifestyle since coming out, having a lover, and other aspects of changes that subject has gone through as a result of becoming a homosexual; etc.

h) Degree to which the subject feels that his basic needs are met by the subculture: identification of basic needs; satisfaction with being gay and reasons for answer; feelings about different settings in the homosexual scene and changes that subject would like to see made in them; reason for desiring the changes; etc.

i) Subject's description of the homosexual subculture: where he obtains sexual partners; what the places are like; what he likes and dislikes about them; dangers involved; social life in the gay community; gay friends; general description of what it is like to be gay; etc.

j) Miscellaneous: sex education; subjects feelings about his own physical attraction and the role of physical attraction in gay life; trouble with the law or other authorities; social pressure from friends, parents, employers, relatives, women, others; specific sexual activities; relationships with lovers and affairs; relationships with gay females; feelings about the impersonality of some aspects of gay life; attributes to be looked for in partners in various settings; homosexual customs and mores; subject's perception of societal attitudes about homosexuality; how such perception influences his activities; issue of passing and leading a double life; gay liberation; sexual roles in general relationships; group sexual activity; heterosexual friends at present; desire to become heterosexual; psychiatric or other treatment; feelings about aging; guilt over homosexual activities; advantages of homosexuality; gay incest taboo; effect of religion on homosexuality or guilt; how subject got involved with homosexual society as opposed to

homosexual acts; concrete problems posed by homosexuality; psychological problems; changes in non-sexual aspects of subjects life that he attributes to being in the homosexual sub-culture; etc.

The topics shown in this appendix are examples and do not represent a complete listing, but rather consist of items picked to illustrate the variety of topics that are dealt with in the interview.

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